Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER & MELVIN J. LASKY

INTER-NATIONAL PSYCHO-PATH

The Case of Donald Hume

GEORGE STEINER: **Leavis**

RICHARD WOLLHEIM: **Babylon**

BRENDAN BEHAN: **Story**

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H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

E. H. CARR'S SUCCESS STORY

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Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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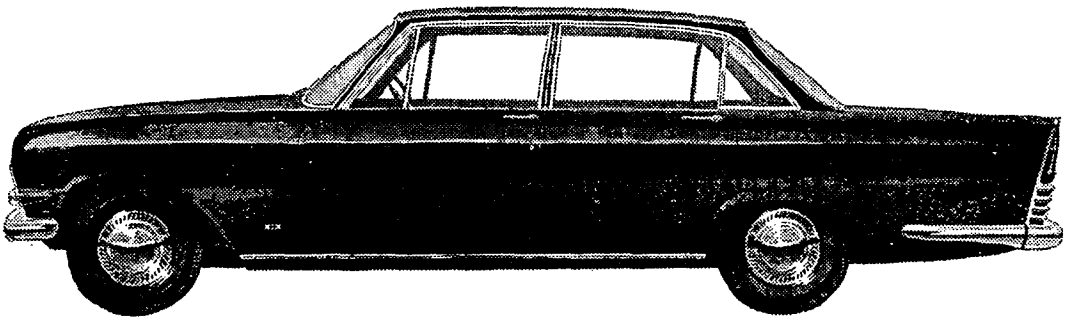

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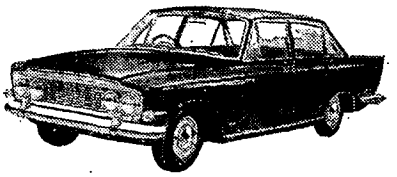

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Brendan Behan

A Woman of No Standing

"AND THE PRIEST turns round to me," says Ria, "and says he: 'But you don't mean to say that this person still goes down to see him?'

'I do, Father.'

'And brings him cigarettes?'

'Not now, Father, not cigarettes, he's gone past smoking and well past it, but a drop of chicken soup, tho' he can't manage that either, these last few days.'

'Well, chicken soup or cigarettes,' says the priest, 'what really matters is that this person continues to visit him—continues to trouble his conscience—continues as a walking occasion of sin to stand between him and heaven. These Pigeon House people must be, shall be, told straight away. They'll be informed that you, and you only, are his lawfully wedded wife, and that she is only—what she is. Anyway, this way or that, into that sanatorium she goes no more.' "

"You know," puts in Máire, when Ria had finished, "it's a known thing and a very well-known thing, that a person cannot die while there's something not settled in his conscience. That one going to see him so, outside of the insult to Mammy here, his lawful wife, not to mind me, his only daughter, for all we're away from him since I was five—on the top of all that she was doing his soul the height of injury, not to mind holding his body in a ferment of pain, below on this earth, down in that Pigeon House."

"But no matter," says Ria, "the priest wasn't long about seeing the Reverend Mother and leaving strict instructions that she wasn't to be let in any more—that she was no more his lawful wedded wife than the holy nun herself."

"So now," said Máire, "if you don't go down early tomorrow you'll not see him at all, because I doubt if his struggling spirit will back away from Judgment any more, now that all is settled, and his mind at ease."

He was still alive when I got down to the Pigeon House but she wasn't far out, because he didn't last out the night.

His face all caved in, and his hair that was once so brown and curly was matted in sweat, and God knows what colour.

Ah, you'd pity him all right, for the ruined remains of what was once the gassest little ex-Dublin Fusilier in the street—off with the belt and who began it—up the Toughs, Throttle the Turks, and Hell blast Gallipoli.

Ria, his wife, was the kindest woman in Ireland, and (I've heard my mother say) in her day, the best looking.

He died that night and the nun and Ria and Máire were charmed that he'd no mortal sin on his soul to detain him in torment for any longer than a few short years of harmonious torture in Purgatory.

The priest was delighted too, because, as he said: "It's not when you die, but how you die that matters."

As for the woman, no one saw her to know what she thought of it, but the priest gave strict orders that she wasn't to be let near the funeral.

The funeral was on the day after. He'd lain the night before in the mortuary chapel. They've a mortuary chapel in the Pigeon House sanatorium, nice and handy, and most

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soothing, I'm sure, to new patients coming in, it being close by the entrance gate.

There used to be an old scribble on the porch that said: "Let all who enter here, leave hope behind." But some hard chaw had the beatings of that and wrote: "It's only a step from Killarney to heaven—come here and take the lift—any lung, chum?"

We had a few prayers that night, but she never turned up, and I was sorry, because to tell the truth, I was curious to see her.

AT THE FUNERAL next day, our cars (Ria did it in style all right, whatever lingering scald her heart might hold for him), greased off the wet Pigeon House Road, through Ringsend, and into Pearse Street, and still no sign of her. Right up the Northside, and all the way to Glasnevin, and she never appeared.

Ria had the hearse go round the block where we'd all lived years ago—happy, healthy, though riotous betimes—fighting being better than loneliness.

I thought she'd have ambushed us here, but she didn't.

I had some idea of a big car (owned by a new and tolerant admirer), sweeping into the cortège from some side street or another, or else a cab that'd slide in, a woman in rich mourning heavily veiled in its corner.

But between the Pigeon House and the grave not a one came near us.

The sods were thrown in and all, and the grave diggers well away to it when Máire spotted her.

"Mother, get the full of your eyes of that one."

"Where, alanna?" asks Ria.

"There," said Máire, pointing towards a tree behind us. I looked towards it.

All I could see was a poor middle-aged woman, bent in haggard prayer, dressed in the cast-off hat and coat of some flahool old one she'd be doing a day's work for (maybe not so flahool either, for sometimes they'll stop a day's pay on the head of some old rag, rejected from a jumble sale).

"But I thought," says I to Ria, "that she'd be like—like—that she'd be dolled up to the nines—paint and powder and a fur coat maybe."

"Fur coat, how are you," said Ria scornfully, "and she out scrubbing halls for me dear departed this last four years—since he took bad."

She went off from behind her tree before we left the cemetery.

When Ria, Máire and myself got into the Brian Boru, there she was at the end of the counter.

I called two drinks and a mineral for Máire, and as soon as she heard my voice, she looked up, finished her gill of plain porter and went off.

She passed quite near us and she going out the door—her head down and a pale hunted look in her eyes.

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Giles Playfair & Derrick Sington

International Psychopath

The Case of Donald Hume

EVEN BY COMPARISON with such examples of British architecture as Pentonville and Wandsworth, the prison of Regensdorf, near Zürich, is a bleak and forbidding-looking place. The system there is what's called "progressive." But that doesn't mean that it's especially liberal or enlightened. When a man begins his sentence, he is put in Class One, and kept in solitary confinement; usually he "progresses" to Class Two after six months and can then mix with his fellows.

However, there is an Englishman serving a life sentence for murder who has already been in solitary confinement at Regensdorf for over two years. He was pronounced a dangerous psychopath at his trial, and he is the prison's most notorious and difficult inmate. To his captors he is known officially as Donald Brown. That is a name he took by deed poll in April, 1958, but it conceals an identity he never fully committed himself to concealing, and certainly wouldn't wish to lose now. He is also Donald Hume—*the* Hume he'd still like to think. One question he invariably asks a visitor is whether there's been anything about him in the newspapers, and it's depressing for him to be told that lately there hasn't been.

But the gentlemen of the Press, who helped to make him, take the view that his is now an old story, a dead story, a story very much told. They believe that he'll almost certainly be locked up at Regensdorf for the rest of his natural life. They admit, of course, that if he escapes, he will become news again. But apart from that rather remote possibility, he is someone they are willing to let the world forget. This indifference to Hume is apparently shared by criminologists. And that is surprising, because his case is an appalling example of the consequences society risks so long as psychopathic offenders are treated punitively instead of curatively.

DONALD HUME was sent to prison for the first time in his life in 1950; he had been convicted at the Old Bailey of being an accessory after the fact of the murder of Stanley Setty.[1] At that time, he had a psychopathic history, but no known record of violence and only one previous conviction, which was for a minor offence. Three months after his release from prison in 1958, he was handsomely rewarded by *The Sunday Pictorial* for a blood-curdling "confession" to the Setty murder itself. He remained at liberty for another eight months. During that brief period, he carried out three armed bank robberies, shot and grievously wounded three men, and killed a Zürich taxi-driver—the crime for which he is now serving his life sentence at Regensdorf.

The British popular Press was inspired by these facts to label Hume "a cold-blooded killer," "a self-confessed double-murderer," and "the most vicious gunman known to the police." And from the story as told in the newspapers, society could draw the moral that "monsters"

[1] This was one of those especially bizarre and horrific murder cases which England has a reputation for spawning, and it ended in an unsolved mystery. Stanley Setty was a rather shady car dealer. Hume was accused of stabbing him to death, cutting up the body, packaging it and dropping the parcels from an aeroplane into the sea. He admitted disposing of Setty's body as alleged, but denied he had killed him or dismembered the corpse. After the jury had failed to agree, the prosecution made way for a directed verdict of Not Guilty. Subsequently, however, Hume pleaded guilty to the subsidiary charge of being an accessory after the fact.

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do not always get their just deserts; that here was a "monster" who had twice "cheated the gallows"—on the first occasion through successful lying and on the second through having the bad grace to commit his capital murder in a country (Switzerland) where capital punishment does not exist.

But a closer examination of the facts reveals a different story, with a very different moral. It is the story of an abnormal man who came out of prison so unhinged that he was capable of publishing to the world a confession of murder which cannot possibly have been true. And it demonstrates the penalty that society must pay, in waste and suffering, for its persistent failure to deal humanely or constructively with the problem of the criminal psychopath.[2]

Unstable History

MANIFESTLY, Donald Hume was already suffering from abnormality of mind[3] when, in 1950, he stood trial for the murder of Stanley Setty and was subsequently convicted of being an accessory. He was twenty nine years old at the time: weak-chinned and flabby-faced, but not bad-looking, though his eyes occasionally betrayed a suggestion of something frightening. As can be the case with such people, his intelligence was above average; in boyhood he had won a scholarship to a secondary school. He was a skilled electrician, and he had proved himself capable, in his checkered time, of running several perfectly legitimate businesses—most recently one for the manufacture of plastic switch-plugs. Two years earlier, in 1948, he had married an attractive, responsible and well brought-up woman of his own age by whom he now had an infant daughter.

But despite his ability and advantages there was plainly no stability to Hume. During the months before his arrest he had been earning a shady living in ways of which his wife knew nothing. And this wayward pattern of behaviour might already have been predicted when as a boy of fourteen he renounced the scholarship he had won, and gave up the chance of a good education to start out on his own. Ever since then his life had been a story of continual restlessness, of sticking to nothing for very long, of trying one activity after another, honest and "semi-honest,"[4] in some hopeless quest for recognition and self-fulfilment in what to him apparently was a hostile world. It was probably because of this personal quest rather than through any real political conviction that in his early youth he joined the Communist Party, though his activities as a Communist had evidently never amounted to much and had ceased altogther when war broke out.

He was, too, a chronic liar and fantasy-builder who seemed concerned, above all, with buttressing his own ego. Though his lies might on occasion have a calculatedly dishonest purpose, they were mostly of a childishly romantic, self-glorifying kind that in terms of practical gain were senseless. For example, he claimed—and even his wife believed him until she heard the story disproved in court—that he had been an R.A.F. Pilot Officer during the war, with many bold exploits to his credit, and a decoration for his part in the Battle of Britain; whereas the drab truth was that he had been invalided out of the ranks before he even took his flying tests. There was also a paranoid streak in him, which made him incapable of forming lasting human relationships. He had an obsessive hatred of his mother, which was reflected in his basic attitude towards all women; and while his wife had thus far found him a devoted husband, she had also found him difficult and at times quite irrational. He said that he was illegitimate, and this may have been true; for no father's name is entered on his birth certificate, though it is also apparent from this that his mother, a Swanage school-mistress, was married when he was born and that her married name was Hume. Illegitimacy, it may be noted, can prey on children's minds, and often seems to contribute to disordered development. Hume said further that his mother had sent him away because she was ashamed of him and wanted to be rid of him, but after the trial this allegation was to be disproved by Rebecca West, who learned that in fact his mother had put him in

[2] Psychopaths are variously classified in medical books. The majority, quite probably, are not delinquent and only a minority among criminal psychopaths are aggressive. See Brian Inglis (ENCOUNTER, September, 1960): "A man who is locked up like a beast tends to become bestial, and as psychotics and psychopaths have often been strait-jacketed and padded-celled, they have tended to have a spectacularly violent history; but they are not necessarily more prone to violence than anybody else."

[3] Much information can be found in a masterly account of the case written by Rebecca West (*Train of Powder*, Macmillan, 1955.) Her sources were the evidence given at the trial itself, and independent investigations she carried out afterwards.

[4] His own description of himself at the trial.

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an institution for reasons quite beyond her control, and had later taken him back to live with her.

CHRONIC LYING, essential purposelessness, an ill-founded sense of being persecuted by the world and a corresponding desire for revenge—these are usually considered classic symptoms of the aggressive psychopath. They were manifest in Hume when he stood his trial for Setty's murder in 1950. Moreover, at this time there was a report in existence, dating back to 1941, which diagnosed Hume as someone suffering from a severely psychopathic condition. It had been made by a specialist at an R.A.F. hospital where Hume was treated for cerebral meningitis following a flying accident, and it was presumably the direct cause of his being invalided out of the R.A.F.[5] A year later, Hume committed his one known offence prior to the Setty trial. It was a minor offence in itself—that of masquerading as an R.A.F. Pilot Officer—but in his case it was clearly indicative of abnormality of mind. And, significantly enough, the Recorder of London, before whom he appeared, remanded him to Borstal for a month's mental observation. As a result of this, the Recorder may well have been persuaded that Hume was not fully responsible, for instead of passing a prison sentence he bound him over.

But however obvious it was or should have been in 1950, that this man, charged with murder, was mentally unbalanced, the fact occasioned not the slightest public or official concern. There was suddenly the vast amount of interest in him that he had always craved, but it was concentrated on the simple and macabre question of whether he could or could not escape being "topped." It was up to him, and him alone (as it would still be today) to put his mental state in issue. But he was clearly not "M'Naghten mad" (legally insane), and even if the defence of "diminished responsibility," which the 1957 Homicide Act introduced, had been available to him, he would have had no motive for using it, since he rightly believed himself in a position to fight the case successfully on the facts alone.

Nor after he was found Not Guilty of murder, but convicted of being an accessory, was there any apparent awareness that Hume represented a serious social problem because he was a medical one; that his abnormality of mind, already proven dangerous, might become more dangerous still, if it were left untreated. Very possibly, as the law then stood, the judge had no alternative, except to send him to prison; for while moral defectives, that is people with a history of persistent and vicious delinquency before the age of eighteen, were certifiable, psychopaths as such were not; and the judicial power to commit the psychopathic offender to hospital did not exist then, as it does now under the 1959 Mental Health Act. Nevertheless, it seems certain that even if the judge had possessed the power to commit Hume to hospital, he would not have used it; for he was plainly concerned with the gravity of the crime itself and not with the state of mind of the man who had committed it. Hume, at any rate, was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment.

Inmate of Dartmoor

UNDENIABLY, the prison system in England has been greatly liberalised during the past fifty years. Today twelve per cent of all convicts are in open institutions; and even in some closed prisons a concentrated attempt is made to rehabilitate criminals by non-punitive means.

Nevertheless, the prison in England which is a hospital (except in name) and is intended for mentally ill offenders, after being long promised, is still not in existence.[6] And, ironically enough, under present conditions the less responsible an offender is for his actions, and the more he is in need of treatment as opposed to punishment, the greater the likelihood that he will be sent to the most punitive type of institution, where the emphasis is on discipline of a crude kind and where in practice, if not in theory, violence (and even non-violent disobedience) is apt to be met with violence. This is particularly true in the case of aggressive psychopaths like Hume, for they are rightly regarded as being unpredictable, difficult to control and an ever-present danger to the maintenance of order. They are in short "security risks."

It would seem that in spite of what was known or should have been known about Hume's psychopathic condition, he was not at first classified as mentally disordered or considered a "security risk." At any rate, he was originally sent to Wakefield, which is one of

[5] See *Portrait of a Double Murderer. By* JOHN WILLIAMS (Heinemann, 1960).

[6] The building is under construction at Grendon Underwood, twenty three years after it was first proposed.

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the most progressive and liberally administered of English prisons. But Hume did not stay long at Wakefield. He served the bulk of his sentence at Dartmoor, the bleakest English prison (and now condemned). Precisely what it was that occasioned his transfer is not known, for information of that kind is not available from official sources. He himself has told an acquaintance of the writers that he behaved violently. In any case a move from Wakefield to Dartmoor is a downward plunge for a convict, and in effect, if not in name, is a disciplinary punishment. One may assume, therefore, that Hume must have done something to reveal himself as being too unbalanced and too much of a potential trouble-maker to be safely handled under the comparatively lenient Wakefield régime.

How Hume behaved himself at Dartmoor, what overt evidence he gave of a disordered mind, whether observations were made of his condition, what efforts were made to ameliorate it, and what prognosis was made of his likely pattern of behaviour after release—these are matters on which no information is obtainable. They are nonetheless of obvious social importance in the light of later developments.

Hume himself was uncomplaining of his treatment at Dartmoor; he even said that the place was like "a paradise," though that kind of statement is typical of his public braggadocio. He also liked to pretend that he had been something of a hero to his fellow-prisoners. According to him, they gave him a farewell party on the night before his release. "Six 'screws' looked on in amusement," he relates in his "Confession," "as we tucked into a special pre-release feast spread on a table-tennis table. ... And in the centre lay a huge, oblong, iced cake. On it was written an apt message: A fuse will be blowing shortly. In coloured icing on the cake was a small plane with a bundle dropping from it." The message about the fuse blowing would have been apt, indeed. But if that jolly little sugar-cake reminder of Hume's crime was really permitted and watched by the "screws", one must regard it as a quite astonishing example of how reformative zeal under the English penal system is actually expressed. It seems more likely that the whole story was just another of Hume's fantasies, illustrative in this case of his yearning for admiration and, perhaps, even for love.

He was appreciated in Dartmoor for his skill as an electrician; he was adept at making wireless sets from the most primitive of materials. But from what can be gathered by the writers from talking with some of his former fellow-inmates he was neither liked nor accepted as "one of the boys." He always wanted to be "Number One," and he had the reputation of being such a neurotically bad loser at darts that his opponents eventually used to let him win rather than put up with his tantrums if he lost. He was considered self-centred and a liar. He was particularly resented for "shooting a line" about his service in the R.A.F.

This boasting of imaginary heroics in the air was, perhaps, the most persistent of all Hume's fantasies, and it came from a genuine passion for flying. Trudi Sommer, the girl he was to meet in Zürich, has told the writers that when she and Hume were living together he liked to stay much at home and read "book after book about flying." Rebecca West, who visited Mrs. Hume after the Setty trial in Hume's Finchley Road maisonette, has described how on one wall pictures of aviators and air battles, with plane parts and a medal, were arranged in a pattern "like the outline of a great bird." Several times at his trial Hume was angered, but never more so than when prosecuting counsel suggested that he had *failed* his flying tests in the R.A.F.; and while he apparently had no real talent as a pilot, he did at last, through a combination of courage and uncharacteristic perseverance, obtain a civilian "C" licence. It is worth noting here that another notorious criminal psychopath, Neville Heath, loved to fly. He actually was an R.A.F. Pilot Officer for a while, but, like Hume, he boasted of heroic achievements which were all in his imagination; and, like Hume, after he had been cashiered he masqueraded in a Pilot Officer's uniform and wore medals he had never won. One can understand why the aggressive psychopath, with his compulsion to conquer an unconquerable world, should want to soar into the air. A passion for flying may be at once symptomatic and symbolic of his condition.

In Hume's case, at any rate, to be earth-bound was to be continually forced to pose. And some of his fellow-prisoners at Dartmoor considered that his vaunted toughness was no less of a pose than anything else about him. He was quarrelsome and quick to take offence, they say, but if a row started he wouldn't stand up and fight. He would behave like a woman, crying, screaming and trying to scratch his opponent.

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Moreover, he displayed no will to defy authority. He was very seldom "on report" or "on charge"; he didn't appear interested in escaping; and in his relations with the "screws" he was deference itself. "He used to lap them up for favours —crawl to 'em." Hence he took everyone by surprise at a Christmas sing-song, when his contribution was a song about the "screws" with words that he had written to a popular wartime tune. "F— 'em all", the chorus began.

BUT IF THE AGGRESSIVENESS in Hume was largely kept down by the heavy hand of Dartmoor it could not be eradicated; and manifestly his determination to prove himself in his own warped way, and to force the world to heed him by whatever means he could, only became the more dangerously explosive through being artificially repressed. He was released on February 1st, 1958, having earned nearly his full remission and served just over eight years of his sentence. Apparently, no official arrangements were made for him to receive after-care, none were made to find him work or to direct his future in other ways. Considering that he was able during the year ahead to leave the country three times—on the first occasion taking with him illegally two thousand pounds he had received from *The Sunday Pictorial* and, on the other two occasions carrying loot from alleged robberies of the Midland Bank—the police could not have been concerned to keep him under even cursory observation. He was simply dumped back onto society: a fuse which could blow or not as it chose.

[7] The prosecution alleged that Hume had somehow induced Setty to come to his Finchley Road flat on the evening of October 4th (1949), had stabbed him to death—theft was suggested as the possible motive, since Setty was known to be carrying at least a thousand pounds on him in five pound notes—and the next day had cut up the body before dropping the parcelled pieces into the sea from a plane. Hume's story, on the other hand, was that on October 5th three men, whom he knew only as Mac, Greeny, and The Boy, had delivered parcels at his flat, which presumptively contained Setty's remains, and had paid him £150 in five pound notes to dispose of them. While this story may have seemed fantastic, the prosecution's case was certainly not proved beyond reasonable doubt. Nobody could testify to having seen Setty arrive at Hume's flat on October 4th. The downstairs neighbour, who was in all evening, heard nothing.

Most important of all, Mrs. Hume, who was at home that same evening looking after her baby, was unaware of Setty's presence—she had never met Setty in her life—or of anything untoward having happened.

WHILE HUME was still in Dartmoor, he had talked of "blowing the lid" off the Setty murder as soon as he got out; and from the moment of his release he was under newspaper pressure to make good that threat. However, nearly three months passed before he finally came to terms with *The Sunday Pictorial*. By then, according to Victor Sims, the reporter deputed to work with him, Hume had tried without success to hawk articles of a less explosive nature around Fleet Street, and was in need of ready cash to satisfy his "expensive tastes." Even so, Mr. Sims has said, Hume was deeply afraid of the consequences of "confessing." He believed the police would try to re-arrest him and he "knew that once he revealed the grisly secret of the Setty killing, he would be shunned by society for all time."

The "grisly secret" turned out to be remarkably similar to the theory of the crime which the prosecution had put forward at Hume's trial[7] and which had failed to convince a jury. It did differ in one vital respect; but that made it all the more unbelievable.

Hume says, in his "Confession," that when he returned home to his Finchley Road maisonette at 7.35 p.m. on October 4th, 1949, he found Setty in the living room. He does not explain what Setty wanted of him or who (if anyone) let Setty in or why that very cautious man—he habitually went around with a bodyguard—should have turned up uninvited, and alone. Presumably Mrs. Hume, since she was not in the living room, was upstairs with the baby. There can be no doubt at all that both she and the baby were at home, and indeed Hume makes no attempt to suggest they were away for the night.

He was (he says) accompanied by his pet mongrel dog, Tony—his "inseparable companion"—and he already harboured homicidal intentions towards Setty, because the latter had kicked Tony ten days previously. Sharp words were at once exchanged between the two men, but it was not until after they had been alone together for seventeen minutes that Hume's homicidal intentions—so he continues—erupted into action. He ran from the room to grab hold of one of his "treasured war souvenirs" (!) in the hall: a German SS dagger. He advanced towards Setty, holding the knife at arm's length and pointing it upwards at his enemy. Setty swung at Hume with the palm of his hand. They closed; they grappled; they rolled over and over, Hume "hacking away" at Setty's

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chest and legs with his knife, Setty trying to use his superior weight and strength to break Hume's neck. Now one was on top, now the other. They fought for a full two minutes before Setty finally lay dying. Hume stood over him. "With a feeling of exhilaration and triumph surging through me, I watched the life run from him like water from a drain."

A FINE SCENE for a gangster movie, of course; and fine to identify oneself, if one is thus disposed, with the tough and ruthless victor! But what of the actuality? Rebecca West, who visited Hume's flat, has called it an "eggshell of an apartment." If such a death struggle as Hume describes ever took place there except in his imagination, is it conceivable that Setty wouldn't have howled over and over again in agony, that Tony wouldn't have growled and barked, that Mrs. Hume wouldn't have come dashing downstairs and in all probability have flown out of the house yelling for help, leaving the baby upstairs screaming its head off? Is it conceivable that the downstairs neighbour would have heard nothing and that no-one nearby would have been aware of the slightest disturbance? On all these points, with one extraordinary exception, Hume is silent. He says that Tony—his "inseparable companion", remember, that Setty had kicked—slept peacefully throughout. Some watch-dog!

But even if one can swallow that, and everything else, there remains an indisputable scientific fact to disprove Hume's story of the struggle. At his trial two pathologists gave evidence: Dr. Camps for the prosecution and Dr. Donald Teare for the defence. These two eminent experts disagreed as to whether it was more likely the murder had been done by one man or several, but it was common ground between them that Setty had died of five quick, clean-cut stab wounds to the chest and that there were no marks on Setty's hands or body to suggest that he had offered any resistance or that there had been a struggle. Dr. Camps, indeed, was even more specific after the trial when, in March of 1951, he addressed a private meeting of doctors, scientists and barristers. He said that the autopsy proved the stab wounds to be so clean-cut that Setty could not have moved his body a *fraction of an inch* while they were being delivered. He also revealed that Setty was very probably in a drunken stupor, for a blood-test showed that just before he died he had consumed eight double whiskies or their equivalent. This evidence was not produced by the prosecution at the trial. Dr. Camps remarked that it would only have shown how those responsible for the murder were able to do it *without causing a struggle.*

THE MANIFEST UNTRUTH of Hume's description of his "death grapple" with Stanley Setty does not, of course, prove that Hume was innocent of the murder. It does show that he deliberately fabricated a spurious confession. Why should he have done this if he indeed committed the crime, and knew how it happened?[8] The question is unanswerable. But the point is that so far from Hume's confession proving his guilt of the murder of Setty, it only makes the case a deeper mystery than ever. In 1951 Dr. Camps had said: "Who killed Setty and the circumstances in which it occurred must remain a matter for speculation." That statement remains as true to-day as ever it was.

What was Hume's purpose in publishing such damaging falsehoods about himself? It is difficult to agree with Mr. Victor Sims, who after all felt satisfied the "Confession" given to him for the *Pictorial* was true, that Hume's only motive was financial gain. No doubt, the fee of £2,000 was a considerable inducement; but that does not necessarily mean he was bribed into doing something that basically he did not want to do. Mr. Sims himself said that Hume "hated being a nobody" and that the "lure of notoriety was too strong for him to resist." That lure, of course, *The Sunday Pictorial* held out to him. But one may suspect that he had yet another motive, deeper and even more indicative of his gross abnormality of mind.

His former wife had stood loyally by him throughout his trial and afterwards visited him several times in prison. But at those visits Hume behaved impossibly, and as a result she eventually sought and obtained a dissolution of her marriage on the grounds of her husband's cruelty.

One cannot for a moment doubt that she had every legal and moral right to this divorce. But Hume reacted in his characteristically paranoid way. He accused her of "deserting" him. He harboured at the time of his release from

[8] It is significant, perhaps, that fellow-prisoners of his in Dartmoor, as previously related, considered his toughness a pose and found him ineffectually hysterical when in a temper. Does this not suggest that his fantasy of himself as "a ruthless killer" was acted out *only after* his imprisonment and not before?

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Dartmoor, and evidently still harbours, an intense resentment against her. It is easy to see that his false "Confession" was expressive of that resentment; for however much it damaged himself—and part of him at least revelled in that—it was also likely to harm his former wife, not only through casting doubt on the honesty of her testimony at his trial but through provoking conjectures even less worthy and just as baseless.

WHILE *The Sunday Pictorial* was censured by the Press Council for publicising Hume's self-glorifying claim that he had "got away with murder," the popular Press in general did itself little credit by none the less accepting Hume's "confession," quite uncritically, as the truth. Its attitude, indeed, betrayed a fundamental misunderstanding of the criminal psychopath and an essentially cynical disregard of the problem he poses. The fact is that nothing a man like Hume says, whether good or bad, whether an admission of guilt or a protestation of innocence, can be relied on unless it is supported by independent evidence; and hence to publish what he says, while gratifying his own dangerous thirst for notoriety, can serve no useful purpose whatever. An acquaintance who recently visited Hume at Regensdorf has told the writers that Hume asked him to send a copy of Hugh Thomas's book on the Spanish Civil War. He explained that he himself had fought in the Spanish Civil War, and that he wished to write to Hugh Thomas and correct the many inaccuracies which, to judge from extracts he had seen in the *Sunday Times*, he felt sure must be in the book! Needless to add Hume was never near the Spanish Civil War, and that story is an illustration of his limitless capacity for romancing. But the popular Press, which labelled him a "monster," a pathological liar, and so on, never hesitated to believe him when it suited its own convenience to do so.[9]

Yet there was, of course, always a limit to Fleet Street's appetite for Hume's pronouncements about past crimes. When that limit was reached, his only hope of reviving Fleet Street's interest in him was to commit new ones.

Rampage in Zürich

HE LEFT ENGLAND at the end of May 1958 and flew to Zürich—why Zürich perhaps not even he knew—and it remained, in a sense, his headquarters until he was captured there eight months later. But he never began to settle in Zürich; he couldn't settle anywhere. Now he was in Frankfurt, now in Paris, now back in London; twice he was in the United States and three times in Canada. Before he ever went to Switzerland, he had changed his name officially to Donald Brown, but in spite of this he used during his travels no less than seven different aliases and as many forged passports. These frequent changes of identity cannot be simply explained as the natural precautions which a criminal must take, because most of the time apparently he didn't travel with crime in mind. Though his two return trips to London had an allegedly felonious purpose, there is no record that he ran afoul of the law anywhere else. In both Canada and the United States, as the Swiss authorities were to learn after his arrest, he held legitimate jobs. But only for a short while. Soon he was on the move again. He was, one may think, a man wildly running from himself, even though his self was something he still felt compelled to assert.

And one can understand how that mental cleavage logically resulted in a senseless, criminal rampage.

The *Rämistrasse* in Zürich where the *Gewerbebank* is situated, is a steep main thoroughfare. Walking down there, one found it hard to imagine the sight that was to be seen on the morning of January 30th, 1959—the sight of an armed robber, unsuitably dressed for the time of year in fawn-coloured slacks, being chased by citizens made dauntless out of their highly developed Swiss regard for property. No doubt, one would have found the scene quaintly and incongruously picaresque. But one would also have been convinced that the robber, who had

[9] The *Daily Express* used Hume to "prove" that Timothy Evans, widely believed to have been the victim of a gross miscarriage of justice, was after all guilty. It printed an article, purportedly written by Hume, in which Hume claimed that he once talked with Evans in a remand prison and that, in the course of the conversation, Evans admitted that he had in fact been a party (with Christie) to the murder of his child. Not content with publishing such a serious report regarding a matter of such grave public concern from such a highly tainted source, the *Daily Express* came out with a portentous leader in which it said that the abolitionists had been dealt a heavy blow by Hume's "disclosure." For was not one of the main arguments against capital punishment the risk that innocent people might be executed? And had not the case of Timothy Evans been used hitherto as a prime example of this?

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come flying out of the *Gewerbebank*, must be some kind of madman.

And it seems inconceivable that Hume could ever have seriously hoped to get away with what he did or tried to do. He himself implied at his trial that he was driven to it by a kind of perverted conscience. "You know," he told a British reporter while the jury was considering its verdict, "it would be better if they were out there deciding whether I should be sentenced to death. I didn't do this murder. It was the other Donald Hume. You see, there are two Humes. One wants to be normal. The other doesn't want to be a coward. It was the second Hume who pulled the trigger." And for once in his life he may have been telling the truth, as he saw it. But was he perhaps unaware, when he committed the crime, that Switzerland has no death penalty? It seems perfectly possible that he was. At any rate, what he set out to do on the morning of January 30th, 1959, was so futile and so certain to end in disaster for him that he may have been engaged in a near-conscious attempt at suicide. Trudi Sommer has said that he had in fact, though in characteristically melodramatic fashion, tried to shoot himself some eight days earlier.

Bank robbery is a job for experts. It needs careful advance planning. It can rarely be carried out successfully by one man alone, if only because an accomplice is needed at the wheel of a "get-away" car. But Hume's attempt to rob the *Gewerbebank* was quite unplanned; he had no accomplice and no car to escape in. He simply walked into the bank, where he was unknown, carrying a carton under his arm which concealed a revolver, went straight up to the counter, put down the carton, and without uttering a word fired point-blank at a cashier, who fell to the ground seriously injured. Then he vaulted over the counter, and tried vainly to force open the tills. Someone set the alarm off, and as soon as this happened Hume took to his heels.

A sixteen-year-old apprentice from the bank led the chase. Repeatedly Hume turned round and threatened him with his revolver, but the boy could not be frightened off, and the pursuit continued. Near the foot of the *Rämistrasse* Hume made a sharp right turn, then took a zig-zag course, and finally reached a little market-place by the riverside. It was there that a taxi-driver, named Arthur Maag, tried to intercept him, and there, too, one may conclude, that Hume made his final bid for self-destruction. He shot Arthur Maag dead. It was wanton murder from which he had nothing to gain, for others were already closing in. Soon the police arrived and took him away.

THEY, TOO, BELIEVED at first that he must be deranged, and conceivably might have been content to go on thinking so, if he hadn't turned out to be who he was. During four hours after his arrest, he either couldn't or wouldn't speak. Though he was interrogated in five different languages, he behaved as though he were "struck dumb." Then at last he spoke in English, with an American accent. He said that his name was Anton Stanislav; that he was a U.S. citizen of Polish immigrant parents; and that he was attached to the U.S. Air Force in Wiesbaden. He explained that yesterday he had spent his last dollar in Zürich, that he had wandered around the lake feeding the pigeons, and that he had spent the night "in the open." When he was offered a cigarette, he lent some credence to this wild tale of deprivation, for instead of smoking the cigarette he ate it. It was as if he felt it necessary to provide both the police and himself with some logical motive of desperation for the senseless crimes he had committed.

A simple telephone call to U.S. Air Force headquarters in Wiesbaden quickly established that no Anton Stanislav was known there. And if Hume had any rationality at all left in him he must have realised that it could be only a matter of time before his whole story was checked on and found untrue. British crime reporters, who, in their zeal to see "monsters" receive their just deserts, are adept at ascribing rational motives to irrational acts, later told their readers that Hume had hoped against hope to conceal his identity, because he dreaded above all being sent back to England to face new charges awaiting him there, and another long spell at Dartmoor. But granted this unlikely hypothesis to be true, what was the point of his telling his interrogators that he had spent the night "in the open"? How did that help him to conceal his identity? How did it help him at all? It was manifestly lying for lying's sake. For, in fact, as he was later to admit, he had spent the night in the English church in Zürich, and there he had purloined from the chaplain's room the carton where he hid his revolver. According to the chaplain himself, the carton, which contained dog powders, was left over from a bazaar. It was found missing after-

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wards, and "the dog powders were strewn over a table in the church."

WHEN THE SWISS POLICE discovered who Hume was, they also learned that Interpol had been searching for him and that he was wanted by the British police for two raids on the Brentford branch of the Midland Bank, in August and November, 1958, when he had allegedly shot and gravely wounded a cashier and a branch manager. Thus during the short year since his release from Dartmoor, Hume had proved himself a far greater menace to society than he had ever been before he was sent to prison. No wonder the Swiss were soon complaining of the penal system in England that had allowed such a dangerous man unrestricted freedom and were complaining, too, of the British Press which, in their view, had financed his criminal adventures.

Yet the Swiss themselves are not above criticism for their handling of the case. Though they spent eight months investigating Hume's background and collected evidence in plenty of how little his word could be relied on,[10] they still took it for granted that his claim to have murdered Setty nine years before was genuine. Indeed, Dr. Lienhart, who conducted the prosecution and was otherwise very fair to Hume, declared that his "successful lying" at his trial for Setty's murder was one of the five "most fateful" incidents in his life. And this prompted Dr. Lienhart to protest, somewhat bitterly, about the law of double jeopardy in England; he pointed out that were Hume to be acquitted in Switzerland of a crime to which he subsequently confessed, he would be tried again and punished.

It occurred to us that Hume in Switzerland might have cleared up some of the discrepancies in the famous "Confession," that he might have given his Zürich inquisitors a new and wholly convincing account of the Setty murder. But it is clear from reading the reports in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* that this cannot have been the case. The "Confession" which he made publicly in court, for the benefit presumably not only of the judges and jury but of his world audience, was simply an embroidered version of his *Sunday Pictorial* story and can stand up no better to analysis. In fact, at one point it caused the presiding judge to become incredulous.

In his *Sunday Pictorial* account Hume had said that when he "ripped the blood-stained jacket off Setty's body with his knife," he felt a large bulge; and that bulge had turned out to be the thousand pounds in five pound notes that Setty was carrying. Unfortunately (he said) all but thirty of those notes had got so *saturated with blood* that he was obliged to burn them.

That part of his story he repeated in Zürich, but he made a departure from the original which patently conflicted with it. For he said that when he had found Setty in the living-room, the latter was dressed only in his shirt and his coat was hanging on the wall. How, then, asked the alert presiding judge, was it possible that the bank notes in Setty's breast coat-pocket could have got saturated in blood? For once Hume was nonplussed, and weakly conceded that he must be mistaken, that Setty must have been wearing his coat after all.

Considering the obvious irrationality of the crimes for which Hume was actually tried in Zürich, one wonders if the Court could conceivably have found him responsible to the law, had it realised that here was a man boastfully giving false testimony against himself about a previous murder, and hence in a sense asking for a severer sentence than he might otherwise get. Pronouncing someone a psychopath but sane, which was the psychiatric evidence in this case, is too often, one fears, the same thing as pronouncing someone ill but well. In any case, the diagnosis of Hume by the court psychiatrist was clearly based on an abortive contact with the patient. For at an early stage in the examination the doctor remarked that Hume's love for Trudi Sommer—the girl Hume had been living with in Zürich and was engaged to marry—was not genuine love (*keine echte Liebe*); and this allegation so enraged Hume that he refused to see the doctor again.

"Hume," wrote a British reporter with obvious satisfaction at the end of the trial, "lost his bid for a comfortable retirement in a Swiss lunatic asylum."[11] And society, one is tempted

[10] For example he claimed to have taken part in an I.R.A. raid on a weapon depot, a claim which was speedily refuted by the I.R.A.

[11] In fact, Switzerland has what Professor Mannheim calls the "double-track" system (see *The British Journal of Criminology*, January, 1961). The Courts, apparently, have a mandatory obligation to commit mentally abnormal offenders to hospital for treatment, though they may also require a prison sentence to be served afterwards. This makes the disposition of Hume's case all the harder to understand.

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to add, lost a final chance to deal with his case sensibly.

The Jekyll in Hume

THE MOST PITIFUL PART of the story has never, so far as we know, been so much as hinted at before, and it is this: when Hume was returned from Dartmoor to the free world, with nothing and no one left to restrain his destructive impulses but a too weak conscience, he realised for himself the dangerousness of his position and his need for help. On his own initiative he approached New Bridge, a private After-Care organisation, and was put in touch with one of New Bridge's volunteer workers. Here is the clue to the real reason why Hume held out for as long as he did against the temptation to publish his "Confession." And here, too, is a striking illustration of the folly and cruelty of regarding men like him simply as "monsters," devoid of human feeling and fit only, as witches once were, to be burned.

"One moment," Mr. Victor Sims has written of Hume, "he was a gay, cheerful, even likeable fellow, chatting optimistically about the new life that lay ahead for him in Canada or Australia. But the next he would be a snarling, growling lone wolf with a grudge against society—like an animal that has escaped from its cage." That, of course, is the classic Jekyll-and-Hyde picture. But there were those who found Hume nearly all Jekyll; and to relate their impressions of him in this context is not to indulge in Victorian clichés about there being some good in the most evil men, but to indicate that in a psychopath there may be constructive instincts at war, however forlornly, with his destructive drives.

Out of a terror of his own identity, perhaps, and a corresponding love of masquerade, Hume told few people after his release who he really was. For the first three months he lived in a London boarding-house run by a Mrs. Kemp (that is not her real name) and her daughter, Dora; and to these two he was Johnnie Lea Lea, just over from Canada to take up a job with Vickers aircraft at Weybridge: a very ordinary sort of chap, they thought, dressed in a high-necked yellow pullover and slacks, and extremely well-mannered. In fact, Mrs. Kemp preferred him to several other applicants for the room, because he "looked so decent." Nor did she or her daughter regret this decision afterwards. "If I'd had trouble with another lodger," Miss Kemp has told the writers, "he's the one I'd have asked to give me a hand, or if I'd wanted help in fixing anything in the house. He kept regular hours, was often in at 7 p.m., and did his own cooking in his room. He left his room unlocked. We left our things about, and never missed anything. There were many books on flying in his room, including Dietrich's *My Flights with the Fuehrer*."

This model lodger proved himself a generous sort of chap, too. There was the time he brought home oranges for Mrs. Kemp, and the time he gave a pair of nylon stockings to the maid, though she was a physically unattractive type of girl. And he was an altogether friendly person to have about the house, with his advice to Dora Kemp on what sort of car she ought to buy. When Dora Kemp thought she recognised him from Press photographs published at the time of his release, she felt sure she must be wrong, and only once after that did she have any reason to suspect that perhaps she'd been right, after all. That was the time, she remembers, when she called him back as he was hurrying out of the house. His eyes looked "most peculiar."

THAT SAME LOOK finally destroyed Trudi Sommer's trust in him. He met Trudi very soon after his arrival in Zürich at the end of May, and they lived together, off and on, during his remaining eight months of freedom. Before the end, he meant to marry her or said he meant to marry her; at least he had made some arrangements for the ceremony.

Trudi Sommer has understandably been described in the popular Press as "beautiful," "glamorous," and so on, for she had to be built up into a fitting playmate for the "monster" who came to Zürich in the guise of a dashing, champagne-swilling philanderer. In fact, she is a thin, fair-haired, small-boned girl, with indefinite features; negative-looking in repose, though quite pretty when she smiles. She runs a small hair-dressing establishment, and comes from a humble background.

At the time she met Hume she was recently divorced after an unhappy marriage, and to her he was Johnny Bird,[12] a Canadian test pilot complete with a Canadian accent. The missions he told her he had to perform were, in fact, the pretexts he used for his various trips across

[12] Compare the mementoes arranged in the pattern of "a great *bird*" on the wall of his Finchley Road flat, as described by Rebecca West.

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the Atlantic and elsewhere. It is the measure of her trustfulness that she believed him when he told her on one occasion (though the year, remember, was 1958) that he had to go away because of "the Suez crisis." His frequent absences were hard for her to bear, though she remembers he did make some efforts to keep in touch with her; once he telephoned her from London and another time sent her a postcard from Goose Bay. But in their actual life together he made her happy until near the end, and even now when she knows that from her point of view it was all a cruel masquerade, she can still say (as she has said to the writers), "There was no other like him. Everything in him came from the heart. . . . There's still almost no day when I don't think of him."

It was apparently a simple enough life that they led; they used to go to a skittle-club in the evenings, and frequently they went to her parents' home near Bern at week-ends. Her parents had a three-year-old foster-child whom Hume grew very fond of, or so it seemed; he would often take the child for country walks. And he liked to make himself useful about the house. Once he wanted to scrub the front steps, but Trudi wouldn't allow him to do that; after all, he was "a posh pilot." She remembers him telling her: "Through you I've found a mother and father and sister for the first time." She believed this when he said it, but as she can't be certain of anything about him any longer, she remembers to ask now whether it's true that he had no family and that his mother "rejected" him.

EVIDENTLY, HE COULD NEVER forget himself entirely in his character of Johnny Bird, or forget his real and imagined past. He talked a great deal when he first knew Trudi of his hatred of human beings in general and of women in particular. He said he was only fond of animals. But though it was many weeks before he declared himself in love with her, his behaviour towards her generally was gentle and considerate. She recalls only two occasions when he got tense and angry. The first of these was when she started trying to box with him in play. The other was when they were on a ramble together in the country and he picked some cherries from a tree. "Look out for the police!" she said. She meant it as a jest, but he took it seriously, and suddenly barked at her, "You're always talking about the police!"

About Christmas time, when they were at her parents' house, he started to have weeping fits, and it was clear he was headed for a breakdown, though she had no idea what was the matter with him and he couldn't explain. Then one evening—this was his suicide attempt eight days before he killed Arthur Maag—they were sitting at home when she happened to turn round and saw him with a revolver pointed at his head. He was undoubtedly in an hysterical state. He said he was a bad man who had deceived her, and that he couldn't go through with the marriage. He said he had been a spy in the war. He pointed to some books on a table, and said: "I've written many of those. They're buried, and you can read all about me in them after I am dead." She answered: "I don't want them. I want you." Then he showed her some tablets sewn into the top of his trousers: "Poison," he said, "in case I don't kill myself with the revolver shot." Eventually, she coaxed him into handing the revolver over to her. She found seven cartridges in it. "After that," she has said, "I couldn't look him in the eyes any more. I thought he was mad. His eyes looked terrible."

Even to Dr. Lienhart, who conducted the case against him at the Zürich murder trial, Hume has his "good side." Indeed, Dr. Lienhart's relations with him were consistently friendly; and, unlike the court psychiatrist, he believed (and still believes) that though Hume was afraid to tell Trudi about his past, he was genuinely in love with her; moreover, that his trips to the United States and Canada were an effort to prepare a "new life" that he could lead with her. Though Hume at first threatened to deny everything about the murder, he eventually said that "O.K." he would acknowledge the facts because "Lienhart and Trudi Sommer had been considerate and good to him." At the same time, Dr. Lienhart thinks there was a great deal of what he calls the "actor" in Hume. He remembers in particular one pre-trial interview he had with him, when he brought along a lady from the British Consulate to interpret. At the end of the interview, which went very well, Hume made the gallantly histrionic gesture of plucking a carnation from a vase and placing it in the lady's buttonhole.

OF COURSE, it is more than possible that after his release from Dartmoor Hume became so wedded to a fantasy-world that everything he did and said, "good" or "bad," was in a sense play-acting. He wrote in his

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"Confession" that Tony, the mongrel dog he had owned at the time of the Setty murder, was the "only real pal he ever had." But if his love for Tony was, in fact, any more "genuine" than his later love for Trudi Sommer, one may wonder why he should have been so concerned to advertise it. And he went out of his way to advertise other examples of his tender-heartedness towards dumb animals; he told a newspaper reporter that before the (alleged) Midland Bank robbery he had taken time to bury a dead rabbit in Hyde Park; and at his trial in Zürich he complained that a report about him by the R.A.F., though favourable, omitted any mention of his having once rescued a cat from a roof-top. One can guess at a possible explanation of all this when one remembers that kindness to animals is a stock-in-trade of the big-time hoodlum, at least of the movie variety; and it was towards enacting that role that Hume as Hume seems to have been most powerfully driven.

Certainly, one would be naïve to accept Hume's "good side" at its face value. One knows that the psychopath is often adroit at giving voice to emotions like love, pity, and remorse which he cannot feel, and that the motive behind such kind and thoughtful actions as he may from time to time perform is apt to be both superficial and immature. Nevertheless, Hume's record before the Setty case shows that he had some ability to lead a constructive life, even though he could never lead it consistently; and one may fairly conclude that even after his release from Dartmoor there were still constructive instincts in him which might under proper care have been developed and might yet be developed to-day.

AND THE CLEAREST INDICATION of this is the fact that he should himself have appealed to New Bridge for help after he left Dartmoor. Indeed, there came a time when he expressed an acute awareness of his own abnormality of mind, and asked if there was not some way he might be cured of it. New Bridge did what it could for him. It found him a job as an electrician, though he held this only very briefly. It investigated the possibilities of procuring him admission to a private psychiatric institution where he could receive treatment, but none was found that seemed suitable to his case. And doubtless there was never any hope that he could be successfully treated, except under strict custodial conditions, considering the deterioration in his mental state as a result of his imprisonment and the fact that he was dogged by newspaper reporters who, whether they knew it or not, encouraged him in his destructiveness. A voluntary After-Care organisation, such as New Bridge, was no better equipped to cope with him than a hospital would be equipped to treat a pleasure-loving galloping consumptive as an out-patient.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that a part of Hume still wanted to lead a peaceful and useful life. It was by far the weaker part of him, of course; and the social tragedy is that the means to cherish it and strengthen it did not exist.

The First Essential

NOR IS THERE any real likelihood that a similar tragedy could or would be avoided to-day.

It is true that if the Mental Health Act of 1959 had been operative in 1950, it would have offered a theoretic alternative to imprisoning Hume for a fixed term. For the Act provides that psychopaths as well as psychotics and defectives are certifiable, and if convicted of an offence may be committed to hospital for treatment at the discretion of the court. But, for a number of reasons, the chances of another Hume being dealt with in this manner are extremely remote. In the first place, the question of a convicted offender's state of mind does not arise automatically; there is no certainty under the law that he will be given any kind of psychiatric examination before or after his conviction, or that his fitness for punishment will be or can be challenged. Secondly, even if someone—the defendant himself, for example—takes the initiative in obtaining the requisite medical evidence that he is suffering from psychopathy (or any other abnormality), the Court is not bound to act on such evidence or even to listen to it.

Thirdly, the conception of punishment to fit the crime and of the retributive-deterrent purpose of criminal justice dies hard; and courts are reluctant to spare anyone, however abnormal, from the pains of imprisonment if the offence is as grave and as morally shocking as Hume's was. In fact, they are actually encouraged in this reluctance by the relevant section of the Mental Health Act itself, which enjoins them to take into consideration "the nature of the offence" as well as "the character and antecedents of the offender" before making a hospital order. Thus judges seldom, if ever, invoke

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their powers of committal under the Mental Health Act when people successfully plead "diminished responsibility" to a charge of murder and hence are convicted only of manslaughter.[13] Such people still go to prison (often for life), although they have been found by a jury to be suffering from severe psychopathy or from some other more or less crippling abnormality of mind.

FINALLY, AND MOST SERIOUSLY, it is often impossible, especially in the case of psychopaths, for a court to be satisfied, as the Act requires it to be, that if it makes a committal order, there is a mental hospital willing or able to receive the offender. This was exemplified recently when a certain Peter David Hastings was convicted of wounding his fiancée, and the Court, though convinced of Hastings' abnormality, was obliged against its better judgment to sentence him to five years' imprisonment, since the doctor concerned reported that no suitable hospital accommodation was available. After repeated Parliamentary intervention, the Home Secretary used his administrative powers under the Act to transfer Hastings to Broadmoor, though Broadmoor is an asylum for psychotics and Hastings is not a psychotic. What makes this sort of thing inevitable is that there are not nearly enough mental hospitals. Moreover, those that do exist are extremely chary of accepting psychopathic offenders for treatment —partly because of a lack of the necessary security arrangements at ordinary mental hospitals; partly through a disinclination on the part of the staff to create these; and partly because of the defeatism of some doctors who believe psychopathy to be untreatable. The only institution which contains a wing specifically for criminal psychopaths is Rampton in Nottinghamshire; and treatment possibilities there are little or none.

Nevertheless, pioneer psychiatrists, who take a special interest in the problem of the criminal psychopath, are convinced that the responsibility for grappling with it can and should be shouldered by the medical profession, and that treatment centres—perhaps of an entirely new type—are practicable. Indeed, a few such centres are already planned. Certainly, one may think that to dismiss someone as a psychopath and therefore by definition incurable is hardly more humane and civilised than to pronounce him a "monster" and therefore irredeemably bad. True, statistical evidence suggests that at the moment group therapy is the only form of treatment to which psychopaths can be said to respond in any significant numbers; and since it seems doubtful that group therapy is suited to the violent, deeply antagonistic type of psychopathic offender,[14] treatment for him remains a matter of experimentation. But this is not the same thing as saying that his case is hopeless. New techniques are, in fact, continually been tried both here[15] and abroad, and individual successes have been reported. The most striking one known to the authors comes from Maryland where, in 1950, a 20-year-old youth named Dolfi Salinger,[16] with a record of delinquency dating back to his early childhood, successfully pleaded insanity to a charge of armed robbery after he had been diagnosed by three psychiatrists, including the late Robert Lindner, as an aggressive psychopath and a potential murderer. Since his was a test case and received a great deal of local publicity, the entire medical staff of the State Mental Hospital, to which he was committed for an indefinite period, was put on its mettle. During the next six years, the first four of them spent in the closed, criminal wing of the hospital and the latter two in the open, civil wing, Dolfi Salinger was given intensive psychotherapy of a generally supportive, somewhat authoritarian kind. He was finally found fit enough to live a useful life in a free community, and with the court's permission was discharged.

One must readily admit, of course, that under existing circumstances of resource there is no practical possibility of dealing with every psychopathic offender in England by such lavish means as Dolfi Salinger was dealt with in Maryland. And it would be foolish to suggest that

[13] The Homicide Act of 1957 introduced the defence of "diminished responsibility" to murder, though absurdly enough it cannot be pleaded to any lesser offence. The provisions of the Mental Health Act do not apply to murder, since murder carries a mandatory sentence of either death or life imprisonment. They do, however, apply to manslaughter, the sentence for which is discretionary.

[14] Notable successes have been achieved by Dr. Maxwell Jones' Social Rehabilitation Unit at Belmont Hospital, where doctors, patients and staff live and work together as equals in a kind of free therapeutic community. But a man of Hume's kind could almost certainly not be treated except under strict custodial conditions.

[15] Currently at Broadmoor violent patients suffering from psychopathy are put under sedation before receiving psychotherapy of a community type.

[16] See *The Offenders*, by Playfair and Sington (London, 1957).

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there is any quick or easy way out of all the difficulties which the problem of the criminal psychopath presents. But certain immediate reforms seem clearly indicated.

IN SWEDEN every serious offender is committed to a diagnostic clinic, where he may be detained for as long as three months, before he comes up for trial and, if convicted on the facts, for sentence. Furthermore, the findings of the clinic and its recommendation for disposition of the case are in practice binding on the court. While such a system could not be exactly duplicated here, if only because the placing of so much power in the hands of doctors would violate the spirit of British justice, something similar to it might be acceptable, if a convicted person were given a right to a second jury trial on the issue of his mind alone. This is in fact a right which all psychopathic offenders, who may be committed to hospital on the recommendation of an American court psychiatrist, at present enjoy in the State of Maryland. One thing at least is certain: if there is ever to be a guarantee against repetitions of the Hume tragedy, means must be found both of raising the question of an offender's mental state before sentence and of ensuring that courts will conduct their sentencing policy in accordance with medical facts.

But what is needed in the first place is a willingness on the part of public opinion and all branches of government, the judiciary included, to face up to the problem of the criminal psychopath, and to recognise it for the grave and complicated thing that it is. There is no use thinking of Hume's as an isolated case—as an example of some disaster that can safely be ignored since nothing like it will ever happen again. For there are undoubtedly potential Humes in our schools, and the opportunities for detecting them and treating them in time remain woefully inadequate.

Seven years ago, the Underwood Committee on Maladjusted Children wrote of children with severe behaviour disorders that they "are far on the way to becoming psychopathic persons." The Committee indicated that several hundred thousand school children need specially adapted education or psychotherapy. But, in 1959, the child-guidance clinics and schools for maladjusted children in England and Wales could deal with only 40,000 cases. Moreover, it is now thirteen years since legislation provided for the establishment of Remand Centres where there would be facilities for serious medical observation of selected people charged with offences. Yet there is still no more than one such Remand Centre in existence. It is the beginning in a diagnostic approach to young offenders aged 15 to 21. But, though reasonably staffed with psychologists and social workers, the centre must rely for day-to-day observation on prison officers insufficiently trained for such work and overtaxed with custodial duties; and it has only one doctor with psychiatric experience for 300 boys.

UNDENIABLY, any determined attempt to solve the problem of the criminal psychopath will be extremely expensive. But what a government can or cannot afford seems to depend in the long run on what the public will allow it to afford, and that in turn, of course, is a matter of education. If popular newspapers in Britain are genuinely concerned at the menace represented by Donald Hume and his like, they could do much to shield society from that menace, though not by excoriating "monsters" and "vicious gunmen." They could urge the expenditure of more material and human resources on the true weapons of social defence against criminal psychopathy.

MEANWHILE, Hume himself is in his third year at Regensdorf. Once a week a psychotherapist visits the prison, but he does not see Hume who, in Switzerland too, is considered a man fit to be punished, but not susceptible to cure. Lately, however, Hume has shown signs of settling down at last, and of giving up the violently antagonistic behaviour which has made it necessary to keep him in solitary confinement for so much longer than is the usual practice. Soon he may progress to Class Two. At the end of another twelve years he will be entitled to apply for release, but at the moment nobody foresees such an appeal from him being granted. Murderers have served as long as forty years at Regensdorf. Recently, one of them died there aged ninety-two.

Time of itself, some psychiatrists believe, can cure the criminal psychopath; his aggressiveness simply "burns out." But if a life sentence served in a prison such as Regensdorf cures the psychopath, it is also likely to leave him a mere shell of a human being, hopelessly "institutionalised," as the Americans say. Of course, proponents of capital punishment might suggest that Hume would, from his point of

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view, be better off dead than faced with his present prospects. But, moral considerations aside, it is in fact as socially wasteful to kill a man like Hume as it is to be content with locking him up in a cage for the rest of his life. For nobody pretends that all that might or could be known about the criminal psychopath is known. Nobody fully understands what makes him or why, when he is made, he behaves as he does. How can this knowledge ever be gained, except through research and study? What ultimate source of research and study is there but the criminal psychopath himself? And, obviously, it is only through the acquisition of sufficient knowledge of his condition that a cure can be found for him and that the grave social problem which he embodies can eventually be solved.

Donald Hume belongs in a mental hospital not because that is where he "deserves" to be, but because that is where society, in its own future self-protection, needs him.

John Montague

The Country Fiddler

My uncle played the fiddle—more elegantly, the violin—
A favourite at barn and crossroads dance,
He knew *The Sailor's Bonnet* and *The Fowling Piece.*

Bachelor head of a house full of sisters,
Runner of poor racehorses, spendthrift,
He left for a New World in an old disgrace.

He left his fiddle in the rafters
When he sailed, never played afterwards:
A rural art silent in the harshness of Brooklyn.

A heavily-built man, tranquil-eyed as an ox,
He ran a wild speakeasy, and died of it.
During the depression many dossed in his cellar.

I attended his funeral in the Church of Good Counsel,
Then, unexpected successor, reversed time
To return where he had been born.

During my schooldays the fiddle rusted,
(The bridge fell away, the catgut snapped)
Reduced to a plaything stinking of stale rosin.

The country people asked if I also had music
(All the family had had) but the fiddle was in pieces
And the rafters remade, before I discovered my craft.

To fiddle means, in country terms, to play the violin;
More modishly now, to wangle money, or idle one's time:
He tried all three; I am forced to the same.

Twenty years afterwards, I saw the church again,
And promised to remember my burly godfather
And his rural craft, after this fashion:

So succession passes, through strangest hands.

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John Douglas Pringle

In Defence of Blood-sports

I AM, I suppose, a typical intellectual. Tall, dark, thin, I stoop slightly unless I remember to stand up, and should normally wear spectacles if I were not too vain to do so. My politics are of that rather woolly Lib-Lab variety so common among my contemporaries. I am against Suez, hanging, flogging, Sir Roy Welensky, and being beastly to homosexuals.

In other words, the Lot. Yet not quite the lot. I confess to a slight but shameful deviation. I am for blood-sports. Not only am I for blood-sports: I practise blood-sports. As a boy I rode to hounds—ridiculous phrase!—and though now I can neither afford a horse nor could I ride one if I were able to afford it, I still occasionally hunt with a pack of otter hounds or beagles. I have once stalked deer in the Scottish Highlands but am such a poor shot that I have long given up all kinds of shooting. I remain passionately addicted to fishing for trout and—when I can get it—salmon.

"But how *can* you? It's so beastly!"

I can hear those phrases rising, like balloons in a strip cartoon, from thousands of progressive lips. Well, I can and do. What is more I feel no sense of guilt about any of these activities except otter hunting, and that not because I consider it more cruel than the others, but because I doubt whether there are enough otters left in this country to excuse it. (Like many hunting men I support hunting only when it tends to preserve wild life and not to extinguish it—a paradox which will infuriate my progressive friends still more.) I console myself by the reflection that the particular pack of otter hounds with which I hunt hardly ever finds an otter and practically never kills one.

However, though I feel no guilt, I am sensitive to criticism. I would therefore like to attempt some defence of my behaviour, some justification of my views. Accept this, then, as the apology of a hunting deviationist before the People's Court. And because I shall certainly be found guilty whatever I say, I shall begin with a counter-attack.

HUNTING, shooting and fishing are all traditional pleasures enjoyed by large numbers of people. It is true that hunting and shooting are enjoyed chiefly by the rich —though not necessarily by the very rich; fishing in its various forms is also enjoyed by enormous numbers of working men—a fact which no doubt preserves it to some extent from criticism. But the essential point is that they are all *pleasures*, and the men and women who practise these sports do so for the one reason that they enjoy them.

Now it seems to me that liberals should be very careful before they condemn pleasures enjoyed by others. It is curious that the same people who get angry when sexually normal men and women condemn the pleasures of homosexuals just because they do not share them, should be so quick to condemn the pleasures of those who hunt the fox or shoot pheasants just because they have never tried these things themselves.

"But surely" (and here the protest of my liberal friends becomes the voice of the Public Prosecutor) "you are not going to argue

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that all pleasures are justified no matter what harm they do or what evil consequences they have?"

No, I am not, though in practice I find it difficult to think of many widespread pleasures which are seriously harmful. Still, I would not justify taking drugs or the pleasure perverts are said to obtain from flogging or hanging or from certain sexual practices—unless the partner is willing. But after all hunting-people are not perverts; and I suggest that before liberals condemn pleasures enjoyed by large numbers of men and women, they should first be certain that these pleasures really are harmful or evil. Otherwise their criticism is liable to appear as itself a perverted form of Puritanism.

"But you cannot deny that all hunting, shooting and fishing involves *some* cruelty to an animal, and that *some* of your pleasure at least is derived from the cruelty inflicted?"

Steady! Let's separate those two propositions. I certainly do not deny that all hunting, shooting, and fishing involves some cruelty to animals. Just how much is, of course, difficult to measure and varies widely in different cases; but cruelty there is. I don't pretend that a fox likes being chased by hounds or that a pheasant likes being frightened into the air by beaters so that it can be shot or that a trout enjoys being caught on a hook and played until it is exhausted.

I WOULD MERELY SAY that the amount of cruelty involved in all these pursuits is infinitesimal when compared with the cruelty inflicted by man on animals he breeds for his own purposes. I cannot see, for instance, that it is less cruel to breed hens which are stuffed into tiny wire cages, debeaked by electricity, injected with hormones, kept awake day and night, and finally strangled the moment they fail to lay enough eggs, than it is to breed pheasants which are allowed to live in freedom until the day they are shot. Even those rather horrible shoots at Sandringham and other big estates look very small beer beside the Christmas massacre of turkeys. As for the cruelty of hunting, it is insignificant when compared with the cruelty of castrating lambs or calves or the messy butchery of the slaughterhouse. Have liberals never *been* in the country?

"But at least farm animals are bred, fattened and killed for human consumption. Perhaps shooting is not so bad, but how can you justify hunting foxes or otters which can't be eaten at all, or hares which could be shot if you wanted them but are simply thrown, mangled and bleeding, to the hounds? The two things are utterly different."

Are they? Do we need to eat meat? We could be vegetarians. Or if we must eat meat, because we have come to depend on it, must we eat so much? And must we have caviare and *pâté de foie gras* as well? Don't you eat meat because *you* like it, just as I hunt animals because *I* like it? Does eating justify cruelty—or only hunger? And when were you last hungry? So far as I can see, whatever men may say, in practice they hold the Catholic belief that animals were created for man's pleasure. If I were you, I'd keep off this track. It's dangerous. I haven't even begun on vivisection.

"YOU ARE simply evading the point. You cannot deny that the pleasure obtained from all forms of hunting, shooting and fishing for sport is directly related to the cruelty inflicted on some animal, and that to obtain pleasure from an animal's pain —unless, of course, it is necessary for human life—is morally wrong."

Well, I haven't admitted that yet, but I won't deny it absolutely. In fact, as everyone who has tried any of these sports knows, *most* of the pleasure has nothing to do with the cruelty at all. Most of it comes simply from taking exercise in the open air in pleasant surroundings—from riding a horse or walking beside a river or running across country. Then there's the pleasure of watching the hounds work or studying the fish and so on. But I'll admit that there is a residue of pleasure, small in quantity but important, that is directly related to the cruelty. It's not a simple thing. To me, and I think to most

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people, the actual kill—the worry of the fox by the hounds or the gaffing of a salmon—is actually distasteful. When hunting, fortunately, I'm very rarely there to see the kill and, if I am, I either watch with fascinated horror or, hypocritically, look away. But the chase—there you have me. When I hear the cry of the hounds or the slightly comic sound of the horn, I can't resist it. Adrenalin is pumped into my bloodstream; I feel ten—well, five—years younger; I even forget my hernia and go leaping over the stubble. What's more I actively want the hounds to catch and kill the hare. (Mind you, they generally don't.)

"But that's absolutely primitive!"

Yes, I suppose it is, though not more primitive, when you come to think of it, than hunger or sexual desire, both of which I also enjoy. I'm afraid I *like* feeling primitive now and then.

"Then you don't deny that your enjoyment of the chase is connected with the kill—that is, with the cruelty?"

No, I don't. I don't much mind when the hunted animal gets away, but there is a connection. It's quite fun following a drag on a horse because riding is fun, but I can't really imagine running after a drag. At least not at my age. Again stalking a deer with a camera is rather like undressing a girl and then—well, taking a photograph of her. Oddly enough the connection is strongest for me in fishing. The whole fascination of fishing is luring the fish out of its watery element into your element. If the fish is big enough, I like to kill and eat it. I hate those rivers where you are only allowed to catch two and then must put the rest back, and I can never quite understand the coarse-fishers who keep their fish alive in a net all day and then set them free in the evening. By the way, you do realise that the poor man's fish are uneatable like the rich man's fox? Does that make coarse-fishing more justifiable, because the fish are not killed, or less justifiable, because they are not eaten?

"Oh, do stop quibbling. You've already admitted that you get pleasure out of cruelty, and that's vile."

Yes, I suppose it is. Yet this occasional enjoyment of cruelty doesn't make a man cruel either to other animals or to other men. You can't honestly maintain, for instance, that hunting men are normally more cruel than non-hunting men. They may be more stupid but not more cruel. Most of them keep horses or dogs and feed the birds in their gardens. They don't beat their wives. I *could* argue that since all men are born with some cruelty in their natures, those who get it out by hunting are less likely to vent it on human beings than those who suppress it. Is it really a coincidence that the British people, who have always been devoted to the chase, have also been slightly less cruel to each other than other nations? Perhaps it is. I won't insist.

"YOU SIMPLY won't understand. Cruelty is a moral evil, and the infliction of even the smallest amount of unnecessary cruelty is evil. After all, on your arguments, you could just as easily justify bull-fighting or bear-baiting or cock-fighting. You wouldn't, I suppose?"

I was afraid you'd bring that up. Let's take them one at a time. I have never been to Spain so can't pretend to know much about bull-fighting, but if I did go, I would certainly want to see a bull-fight. But even without seeing one I would take the view that this is a pleasure enjoyed by a great many Spaniards and that it would be wrong to stop it unless there was an overwhelming case against it. The bull-fighting chaps introduce another argument—that it's an art. I suspect, however, that that's irrelevant, because if cruelty can't be justified by pleasure, then I don't see how it can be justified by art.

On the other hand, I would not want to see either cock-fighting or bear-baiting reintroduced into this country. I know that sounds a bit inconsistent but I have a reason. I'm against blood-sports that are pure spectator-sports. I even have doubts about bull-fighting on that score, though bull-fighting is probably saved by the courage and skill of the bull-fighters. But in principle I do find

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something abhorrent in just watching an animal being killed without actively taking part in the killing. It's action that seems to purify the deed. For instance, there is a tremendous difference between riding across country after a fox and sitting in an arena watching a fox being worried to death by hounds. Is this fanciful?

"IT SOUNDS Fascist to me. Do you plead guilty?"

I don't *feel* guilty.

"That simply makes the offence worse. You ought to feel guilty. Your conscience has been hardened by blood-sports. In any case you are guilty. Have you anything to plead in mitigation of your offence?"

Well, I haven't used the word "sadist."

"Don't jest with the People's Court. The verdict is Guilty and you are sentenced to run the gauntlet from Westminster to Trafalgar Square between two lines of members of the League against Cruel Sports. They will be armed with . . ."

Go on.

". . . hunting crops."

Flying Over Sicily

Air is what we fly through, scarcely that. Nothing
Is more like it, but over mountains, under cloud clothing.

Walls like splints wedge cracked hills zigzagging
To summits bearing crosses or castles with roofs sagging.

An island of alive gods and goddesses, saltcrusted, where
Arabs left fountains, Normans cathedrals, Bourbons their

Decadence, seasoned with avarice. I look down
On Palermo, carboned by crags, think now of Nelson

Doting, enslaved, nodding off while she gambled
Far into morning. These vapour trails, scrambled

Over Etna, haze the confetti of boats.
And leaving you I'm caught suddenly by the throat,

The treacheries of absence so drying that cold
Pellegrino even finds me parched, while gold

Domes, cloisters, flash under me, and I'm utterly strange
To this island's last glimpse of almond and orange.

Alan Ross

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Jon Silkin

The Child

Something that can be heard
Is a grasping of soft fingers
Behind that door.
Oh come in, please come in,
And be seated.

It was hard to be sure,
Because for some time a creature
Had bitten at the wood.
But this is something else; a pure noise
Humanly shaped

That gently insists on
Being present. I am sure you are.
Look: the pots over the fire
On a shelf, just put;
So, and no other way,

Are as you have seen them; and you,
Being visible, make them no different.
No man nor thing shall take
Your place from you; so little,
You would think, to ask for.

I have not denied; you know that.
Do you? Do you see
How you are guttered
At a breath, a flicker from me?
Burn more then.

Move this way with me,
Over the stone. Here are
Your father's utensils on
The kitchen wall; but cling
As I draw you.

It seems you have come without speech
Without flesh. If it be love
That moves with smallness through
These rooms, speak to me,
As you move.

You have not come with
Me, but burn on the stone.

If I could pick you up
If I could lift you;
Can a thing be weightless?
I have seen, when I did lift
You how

Your flesh was casually
Pressed in. You have come here
Without bone, or blood.
Is that to be preferred?
A flesh without

Sinew, a bone that has
No hardness, and will not snap.
Hair with no spring; without
Juices, touching, or speech.
What are you?

Or rather, show me, since
You cannot speak, that you are real;
A proper effusion of air,
Not that I doubt, blown by a breath
Into my child;

As if you might grow on that vapour
To thought, or natural movement
That expresses, "I know where I am."
Yet that you are here,
I feel.

Though you are different.
The brain being touched lightly,
It was gone. Yet since you live,
As if you were not born,
Strangeness of strangeness, speak.

Or rather, touch my breath
With your breath, steadily
And breathe yourself into me.

The soft huge pulsing comes
And passes through my flesh
Out of my hearing.

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Richard Wollheim

Babylon, Babylone

18 Novembre, 1860: Mon Paris, le Paris où je suis né, le Paris des mœurs de 1830 à 1848, s'en va. Il s'en va par le matériel, il s'en va par le moral. La vie sociale y fait une grande évolution qui commence. Je vois des femmes, des enfants, des ménages, des familles dans ce café. L'intérieur va mourir. La vie menace de devenir publique. Le cercle pour le haut, le café pour le bas, voilà où aboutiront la société et le peuple.... De là une impression de passer là dedans, ainsi qu'un voyageur. Je suis étranger à ce qui vient, à ce qui est, comme à ces boulevards nouveaux sans tournant, sans aventures de perspective, implacables de ligne droite, qui ne sentent plus le monde de Balzac, qui font penser à quelque Babylone américaine de l'avenir.

It hung before him this morning, the vast bright Babylon, like some huge iridescent object, a jewel brilliant and hard, in which parts were not to be discriminated nor differences comfortably marked. It twinkled and trembled and melted together, and what seemed all surface one moment seemed all depth the next.... Was it at all possible ... to like Paris enough without liking it too much?

I Paris: 1860, 1900

THERE is a certain high comedy in the thought of Lambert Strether, that old Bostonian lemon, as the man come to fulfil the Goncourts' gloomy prophecy: as the crude, unfeeling, coarse-grained hick, who, just as they feared, emerges from the New World, and descends upon Paris, upon *their* Paris as it had once been, and immediately and correctly identifies it and claims it as his own. How ironical that just at the very moment when he feels most in some kind of communion with the Old World, with Europe, above all with the great French metropolis itself, sitting on "a penny chair" in the Luxembourg Gardens, he, or his no less squeamish creator, should use to describe the splendour of Paris the one word that the Goncourts, forty years earlier, had used to describe the condition into which they saw it inevitably declining: Babylon, *Babylone*.

And of course the answer is, not that poor Strether was even less in touch with things than he thought he was, nor that he had any particularly novel ideas about the true nature of a city, but rather that, during these forty years, sensitive taste, the taste of highly civilised men and women, had totally changed on this score, so that Strether's effusions, so far from being either coarse or advanced, were merely a particularly poetical expression of what had by now become ordinary *salon* sentiment.

The turning inside-out of life, so that the walls within which the citizen carried on his existence were no longer the inner walls of houses enclosing rooms but the outer walls of houses enclosing *places* and *boulevards* and avenues, had certainly come about much as the Goncourts had predicted that it would. But instead of this leading to the death of taste and sensibility—at any rate in the sense in which the Goncourts had understood these ideas—it had brought about a revolution in taste and sensibility and, above all, a great extension of those areas of life to which these faculties pertained. The aesthete's province was no longer merely the museum or the drawing-room, where he fed upon the beauties of art or upon the refined *nuances* of manners; it now included in its domain the great thoroughfares and meeting-places of the modern city, the avenues, the cafés, the music-halls, the public gardens, the railway stations, where the flood of contemporary life swirled and raced at its highest mark. The cultivation of scenes and objects and ways of life that were exquisite and *travaillé* in themselves was gradually replaced, or at any rate supplemented, by a passion for the total panorama of urban life in its high colour, its stridency, its complexity, upon which the sensitive eye or ear could impose its own particular aesthetic pattern. As life moved increasingly from the inside to the outside, as it flowed more and more along public channels or stood in public places, so the aesthete, the artist, followed it out into its new setting and caught

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it there. A seat in a café, a stall at the theatre, a park bench, a place on the top of an omnibus were now the natural positions of vantage from which the raw material of art could be extracted.

Extracted, and then transmuted. For if we examine the art in which this new sensibility, this new awareness expresses itself most fully, we find that the qualities that it exhibits are not at all those which are naturally associated with the kind of life that it is about. It captures the profusion of modern existence, true, but the harshness, the garishness, the brutality have all been drained away, and we are presented with an art that is conspicuously sensuous, full of poetic or decorative touches, and for the most part amiable and delicate. Modern urban life seems to have been freed of its attendant strains and anxieties, and presented as though it were a feast of assorted and subtle sensations, a kind of *smörgåsbord,* from which the spectator could, according to the laws of his own taste, pick intriguing or piquant morsels of experience.

The art of Impressionism is, of course, the supreme example of this new kind of sensibility, and it is significant that Lambert Strether, in his ecstatic vision of Paris, should see the city and its environs through the eyes of Monet or Pissarro. The subject matter of the Impressionists, or at any rate the subject matter that is peculiar to them, could be characterised as life modified in accordance with the Goncourts' prophecy. This modification we can envisage, schematically that is, as having taken place in two stages.

First of all, architecturally: in that the picturesque city of Balzac has given way to the open spaces of Haussmann. And, secondly, socially: in that these open spaces have become the natural habitat of Parisians. Looking at an urban landscape of the period, one has the impression that houses, apartments, garrets, brothels, studios, offices, have been bodily picked up, and their contents shaken out into the streets, rather as one shakes out a bag of coins on to a counter. But if we turn from the subject matter of Impressionism to its style, we observe that the latter does not directly derive from the former, or at any rate does not derive from it in the way in which, on an obvious or superficial view of the matter, we might expect it to. The painting is, it is true, in one sense as "modern" as the new content: the touch is apparent, the shapes have become open, the work of the perceptual "constancies" has often been undone, the tones are fresher and less solemn. But in another way the style is not modern; for what would generally be regarded as the peculiar features of the life Impressionism is about, have nothing that reflects or corresponds to them in the actual treatment. The painting in no way incorporates the sense of disruption, of potential violence, of despair and alienation that are held to be endemic to the condition of the modern metropolis: on the contrary, all the novel features of the new life are carefully and discriminatingly savoured, and treated as though they were so many occasions for new pleasures, new experiences, new subtleties or delights. It would, indeed, be difficult to think of a kind of art that was more generously, more recklessly, more suffocatingly aesthetic.

Nor is this particular mixture of a modern urbanised content with a highly sensuous style, with a loving cultivation of regressive pleasures, peculiar to Impressionism. We find it again in, for instance, that great self-appointed modernist, the man who set out to reveal, in a vast fictional panorama, the confusions and the squalor and the degradation of modern urban life: Emile Zola.

II The Two Environments

Michel Butor, in a most interesting article (*London Magazine*, July 1961), on "Les Sources de l'Art du XXième Siècle," attempted a characterisation of a phase of the visual arts that he identified as *le style 1900*. The painters who fall under this title include Signac and the Nabis and early Kandinsky, and it was Butor's point that we cannot grasp the significance of this kind of painting, with its addiction to pure colour and the fresh, broad touch, until we see it in the setting for which it was intended. Place it in one of those claustrophobic rooms where it originally hung, surround it with the heavy stifling furniture of the period, sinuous and enfolding in its forms, reconstruct the kind of oppressive life that those rooms were destined to contain—the wives endlessly engaged in some repetitive handicraft or in picking out Chopin and Debussy on the piano, waiting for their husbands to return, the well-brought up, well-behaved children playing formal games, the occasional visitor or family friend, and then in the evening the husbands returning, from office or mistress, and sitting there in their deep armchairs, dressed in heavy dark suits, filling the room with cigar smoke—and of a sudden, we see the meaning, because we see the role or function, of these paintings. They are there to let in air, just a little air, into this heavy enclosed aquarium-like atmosphere: to take the place of a mild excursion to the sea or countryside:

> All the decorative art of 1900 has this enfolding character: lianes, tendrils, arms that clutch or catch you, that restrain you, that prevent you

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> from falling into that abyss of "elsewhere," that world outside home that makes you dizzy.
>
> What purpose will painting serve in such a context? It will play the part of one of those outings, it will bring in a little air, but only so much of the outside world as you see on a walk. Painting provides "glimpses" of the street, glimpses of the intimate life of other people. . . .

Butor's passing remarks are very instructive, and not just about the kind of art that they're about. For *le style 1900* and the kind of sensibility upon which it depends are essentially related to the environment—they are about it, they reflect it, they compensate for it—and it is Butor's point that any very strong or very emotional conception of the environment, of what it should be like or of what it can do for us, can in the last resort best be characterised by indicating the relative weight it attaches to the conflicting claims of town and country. In one sense, the point is obvious, for town and country conjointly just *are* the environment, so how could any conception of it be anything but a matter of distributing marks between these two elements? But in another sense the point isn't at all obvious. To grasp it we need a deeper understanding than we usually make do with of what precisely it is that the town and the country mean to us. We need to get beyond the superficial views ordinarily held about the pleasures of being a city-dweller or a countryman, and try to find out what are the real gratifications, the real emotional prizes that these two forms of life have to offer us.

For I am convinced that town and country have certain things to them—an immediacy, a complexity, a pervasiveness—which make them always very much more than merely the place we happen to be in. They are the sources of very profound and powerful pleasures that relate essentially to primitive states of the psyche. And furthermore, they have the capacity, because they have the richness, to serve as symbols for these states.

The deep appeal of the city, I should like to suggest, is very closely linked to that phase of infancy when for the first time we become aware of "things" around us: we synthesise the bits and fragments, the good and the bad elements, that had made up our earliest world, and we are now surrounded by whole objects. In its complex structure, in its solidity, the city comes to symbolise for us the primal object, the body; in particular, the mother's body. The city is only one of many such corporeal symbols, but all these have a peculiarly stabilizing effect upon our life that can only be explained genetically. For no sooner has the infant synthesised his uncoordinated world into things than he is immediately made aware of his own ambivalence: that he is capable, indeed guilty, of hating and loving what is in effect one and the same object; in particular, he realises that he has attacked and tried to destroy the most loved of all objects, the mother, and his typical and constant need at this stage is for reassurance that her body has somehow survived the series of onslaughts he has made upon it. This need remains with us forever, and any corporeal symbol that we establish in some measure or other helps us to satisfy it. None more so than the city—at any rate in its ideal form. Enfolding us and also allowing us to circulate freely within it, it asserts the undamaged body and allows us to sense again and again that assuagement of anxiety, the necessity of which we never outgrow.

The deeper pleasures of urban life relate, then, essentially to the corporeal character of the city; and the natural attitude of the city-dweller is a kind of concern for its continued existence. Sometimes this concern becomes excessive, either because of a failure on his part or because the city fails him, and he regresses into serious anxiety on its behalf. He is worried to the point of persecution about aspects of the city that appear threatened. He is inordinately concerned to secure either the preservation of individual things, like old houses or trees or parks, or the free circulation of moving parts, like traffic or waterways or sewage. His state of mind approximates to some kind of hypochondria about the city's bodily condition.

The country, on the other hand, would seem to relate to a yet more primitive phase of the psyche, when the infant, unable to tolerate the thought of his own ambivalence, clings to the world of uncoordinated objects, in which he can preserve his stability (or so he hopes) by concentrating solely upon the good and pleasurable aspects and by ignoring the bad or damaged parts of the environment. He tries to sate himself with fresh and instantaneous pleasures, and to deny both their transience and their unpleasant concomitants, and it is this condition, surely, with its emphasis upon innocence and immediacy that we try to recapture and relive in the typical and most intense moments of our enjoyment of the countryside. We look for beauty, for prettiness, for delightful views and walks, and we are comparatively indifferent to, or oblivious of, their passing character.

The suitability of the countryside to be in this way a symbol of the manic condition has probably much to do with its highly sensuous character, its great natural store of visual pleasures, which lend themselves so readily to this kind of careless greed. But I suspect that it

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also has something to do with the fact that it displays in such a cruel and evident fashion the processes of death and destruction—the leafless hedges, the birds of prey, the cries of animals dying in the night—that it just isn't really possible for those who live in it to contemplate these aspects of it seriously and steadily. This flight from, or denial of, death comes out most clearly in a whole range of activities which are essentially connected, not just with those who live in, but specifically with those who love, the country.

I mean blood-sports. The aggressive or sadistic aspect of those miserable occupations has very often been stressed, and it certainly exists. But what I suspect is really important or significant about them emotionally, why they occupy so respectable a place in comparatively civilised society, is the opportunity they offer for a sustained exercise in the manic defence. In hunting or in shooting, the victims are in large part treated as though they were mere objects of fleeting sensation, quite dissociated from pain or death; and it is only behind such a highly protective screen that the purely sadistic pleasures of the chase could be enjoyed at all. The sportsman gains his real satisfaction, it seems to me, not so much from inflicting death as from behaving as though it didn't exist.

III The City in Art

HERE then we have the ideal roles of the city and the countryside. Ideal, first, in the sense that they make certain pretty high demands upon the quality of the environment: with the gradual suburbanisation of both the town and the country, with the disappearance of real streets and squares and with the wholesale destruction of field and forest, it seems quite possible that in the foreseeable future neither role will be adequately discharged. And ideal in the further sense that these roles are posited as the result of a process of abstraction. For in any actual situation that we encounter, we invariably find the roles mixed, and that into either town or country, as the case may be, there have been imported the gratifications distinctive of the other. So we find in the city parks, and riversides, and public spectacles; and we find in the countryside carefully planted avenues, and woods that have an architectural quality to them, and large houses flanked by outbuildings and walled gardens, and farmhouses maintained with an order and neatness uncommon in the city.

But, of course, where the real blending of these two roles occurs is not so much in the environment itself, in the actual town or country, but in our attitudes towards or our expectations of them. It is we who tend to look for corporeal qualities in the countryside or (more usually) for æsthetic qualities in the city: and if we do not actually find them, then we have the power of projecting these qualities upon the environment. Now, there is nowhere where this constant attempt to blend, to mix, to confuse these two great sources of original pleasure is more in evidence than in art: in literature quite often, but supremely in painting.

In this light we should reconsider the art of the Impressionists. For I want to suggest that the quality that I have been emphasising in their painting, their sustained attempt to preserve, within the depiction of the new scene, much of the older aesthetic attitude, so that the sights of industrialism and commerce, the sprawling streets and factories, get treated simply as occasions of immediate and transient pleasure, can be regarded as an example of this habit or tendency we have of viewing one part of the environment with the eyes appropriate to the other: in this case, of insisting upon seeing the city as though it were still the countryside.

And certainly we find in the urban painting of the Impressionists various features that correspond to the manic attitude. In the first place, there is, as the name Impressionism itself suggests, a tendency to reduce all objects to their purely phenomenal properties: perceived shape and perceived colour are recorded on the canvas, but the remaining properties are obliterated, and the identity of objects as things of a specific kind is deliberately lost in an overall pictorial effect or impression. And, secondly, there is no recognition in this art of the terrible price that in reality has to be paid, in terms of human suffering and deprivation, for these effects and impressions. Indeed, it is this that gives the painting, for all its fine sensibility, a kind of cold inhumanity. It is only here and there in Impressionism—as in Monet's haunting picture of coal heavers unloading their barges in a kind of ghostly procession—that we get any indication that actually living in these urban settings might be rather less agreeable than looking at them. For the most part, the creators of the industrial nightmare emerge from the canvases of Impressionism credited with having been so many theatrical designers or landscape gardeners of genius. The Impressionists personally were, as we know, men of radical opinions: but their style of "seeing" and painting prevented at any rate the *warmth* of radicalism from permeating their art.

BUT BY NOW we appear to have come full circle. For whereas the Goncourts had predicted that the general engulfment of private life in the public existence of the city would mean the

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extinction of taste and sensibility, it seemed at first as though Impressionism had refuted this by showing how the city could become the focus of a kind of taste and sensibility as fine and rich as any of an older, pre-industrial age. But now it seems that the Impressionists achieved this only by suppressing many of the special characteristics of the city and by treating it as though it were a continuation of the country: in which case their art counts not as a refutation, but as a paradoxical kind of corroboration, of what the Goncourts had to say.

The recent appearance of a volume of essays by a writer of our own day,[1] who has fished in these same waters, the waters of Babylon, has prompted these reflections: and a consideration of his work, in the tenuous spirit that they suggest, might do something to advance the problem.

IV On Three Novels

To bring out the relevance of Colin MacInnes to this discussion, we might start by asking what is the subject matter of his writing. If we confine ourselves to the London novels, we find that *City of Spades* is about negro immigrants, *Absolute Beginners* is about teenagers, *Mr. Love and Justice* is about tarts and their ponces. Negroes, teenagers, whores—what have these three typical ingredients of our modern city got in common? Surely just this: that they have all been major agents in bringing to London just the very kind of social change that the Goncourts saw with such horror creeping over the Paris of their day: the turning inside-out of life. It certainly needs no esoteric knowledge to see in our city too the marks of *une grande évolution qui commence*. The evolution is as visible in Soho or Queensway or on the King's Road as it is, say, in dying Stepney or in Colin MacInnes's beloved Napoli. We see it overtly in the growth of espresso-bars and brasseries and glossy shops: we see it more covertly in the proliferation of drinking clubs and late-night cafés and gaming houses; we see it, simplest of all, just in the increasing number of people around in the streets these days, at any hour of the day or night, walking, talking, shopping, window-shopping, standing on street corners, aimlessly, or with some mysterious higher purpose. And if we examine these crowds carefully, if we penetrate the new meeting-places and see who haunts them, the groups we shall find most in evidence, segregated according to their affluence, the expensive call-girls and the successful ponces and the boys clearing £12, £15 a week in the clubs, the tarts and the layabouts and the poor spades in the all-night cafés (*le cercle pour le haut, le café pour le bas*), are just the three groups that constitute the three elements in the London trilogy.

Of course it needs to be pointed out—and the novels are full of such reminders—that this transformation which has come over London life is subject to two important qualifications. In the first place, it has a certain impermanence or insecurity to it, lacking, at any rate as yet, any firm social foundation. For the changes that the Goncourts deplored and the Impressionists celebrated were brought about by the vast organised conventional sections of Parisian society. It was the *bourgeoisie* that thought of them, it was the *bourgeoisie* that enjoyed them, it was the *bourgeoisie* that subsidised them, and it was the *bourgeoisie* that grew rich on them. None of this is true of the corresponding changes that overtook London life in the 1950s. They, on the contrary, have been the work, the achievement one might say, of fringe groups: groups that occupy no orthodox place in society, that enjoy neither its respect, nor its approval, nor, basically, even its toleration. It is, for instance, significant that of the three groups that MacInnes selects, two have been picked out by the authorities as the objects of special legislation: and if nothing has been enacted against teenagers, this is because they are widely held to have enough to answer for with the law as it is. Moreover, with one notable exception (once again the teenagers) whatever these groups have achieved, they have done for themselves, using their own meagre resources, generating their own capital, breeding their own purveyors and speculators and racketeers. I do not, for instance, see how anyone who has enjoyed to any degree the freedom of Spadesville could be anything but deeply moved by the life of enjoyment, toleration and dignity that has been evolved and flourishes in the clubs and coffee-bars of our black ghettoes; a life snatched by those who will not accept defeat, from the twin forces that encompass and would crush it, poverty and the police.

Secondly, the changes of which I speak are in one sense currents working against the main flow of life in our society. As a number of commentators—Michael Young, for instance—have pointed out (in his case with delight) one of the most striking and evident effects of the vast diffusion of TV throughout the country has been to arrest, even to reverse, the fragmentation of family life and to reinforce the strength of the home as a social unit. But then the groups with which MacInnes is concerned, and by the same token the groups that have been the agents

[1] Colin MacInnes, *England, Half English* (MacGibbon and Kee, 1961).

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of disruption, have been precisely those who either lack, or else have deliberately rejected, the very conditions upon which this new cohesion depends. Negroes, teenagers, whores; poverty, boredom, business: for each group there is a reason that has sufficed to wrench them loose from the stabilising effects of domesticity, and to launch them upon the city as the missionaries of movement and disorder.

La vie menace de devenir publique. This old threat revived forms, then, the content of MacInnes's novels: and as good a way as any of bringing this out would simply be to list the locales in which the action occurs. In *City of Spades* we move briskly between the Moorhen, Euston; the Cosmopolitan Dance Hall opposite; the Moonbeam club, Soho; a pleasure steamer to Greenwich; a coffee shop near the BBC; the Apollo Tavern, Stepney; the Sphere, Euston; the Candy Bowl, favoured by American negroes; the Blake Street gamble-house, Soho; and the houses of quick transit in Brixton and Holloway. In *Absolute Beginners*, we are most often in the streets, the streets that the Absolute Beginners have made their own: otherwise in the department store in Sloane Square; at the Chez Nobody coffee-bar; at the Dubious, a drinking club in Soho; at the Dickie Hodfodder, a jazz club; on a pleasure steamer to Marlow; at a jazz concert in a super cinema "up in the North part"; and in the Santa Lucia club, Notting Hill.

THE ANALOGY, however, between Colin MacInnes's writing and the kind of mirror that art held up to the urban scene in the late nineteenth century is not confined to what they both reflect: the free flow of life, that is, in a city suddenly, I would say miraculously, opened up. It extends to the way in which they both reflect it. For in MacInnes's novels we observe the same kind of sensuous attachment to detail, irrespective of its character or function, that is so characteristic of Manet, or Pissarro, or Lautrec. There is the same absorption in scenes and sights which, though grim or sad in themselves, when held up to the light or seen in a particular perspective are momentarily possessed of beauty or poignancy:

> So I went out of the Dubious to catch the summer evening breeze. The night was glorious, out there. The air was sweet as a cool bath, the stars were peeping nosily beyond the neons, and the citizens of the Queendom, in their jeans and separates, were floating down the Shaftesbury avenue canals, like gondolas. Everyone had loot to spend, everyone a bath with verbena salts behind them, and nobody had broken hearts, because they were all ripe for the easy summer evening. . . .

> Whoever thought up the Thames embankment was a genius. It lies curled firm and gentle round the river like boy does with a girl, after it's over, and it stretches in a great curve from the parliament thing, down there in Westminster, all the way north and east into the City. Going in that way, downstream, eastwards, it's not so splendid, but when you come back up along it—oh! If the tide's in, the river's like the ocean, and you look across the great wide bend and see the fairy advertising palaces on the south side beaming in the water, and that great white bridge that floats across it gracefully, like a string of leaves.
>
> Looking north you don't see much, it's true, and westward the view's entirely blocked up by the building you're inside. But twisting slowly on your bar stool from the east to south, like Cinerama, you can see clean new concrete cloud-kissers, rising up like felixes from the Olde Englishe squares, and then those gorgeous parks, with trees like classical French salads, and then again the port life down along the Thames, that glorious river, reminding you we're on an estuary, a salt inlet really, with crazy seagulls circling up from it and almost bashing their beaks against the circular plate glass, and then, before you know it, you're back again round a full circle in front of your iced coffee cup.

V The London Scene

THERE is a further special suitability, a kind of well-adaptedness, in the relation of Colin MacInnes's style to his subject matter, which is not so clearly true of the 19th-century art I have been considering. For the highly æsthetic, almost Firbankian, attitude that MacInnes adopts towards the London scene is something that to a large extent he shares with those who have made it as it is and who are the heroes and heroines of his books. Supremely this is true of the Teenager, the most "heroic," the most romanticised, of the three types. For the Teenager has rejected the conception of the city as a solid three-dimensional environment that shapes and enfolds his life, and instead regards it as a kind of highly coloured backcloth against which he acts out, and upon which he projects, his fantasies. He selects from the city what he wants, what he can use, and the rest he rejects. This is what his revolution amounts to: and from it stem both the pleasures and the anxieties that are peculiar to his way of life.

Let us imagine—for the exercise is a good one—a long string of façades, which winds in and out, curls round upon itself and then straightens out, has no obvious end or beginning: like a child's puzzle, or the hedge of a maze. This string is discontinuous: being cut here and there by streets or by spaces enclosed by streets, like squares or parks. It is also varied in appearance: some of the façades are highly

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ornamented, temple-like or palatial, some are mean and shabby, some are broken up by large expanses of plate glass, some have been opened up on to the street, some all but defy penetration. The sum of these façades is a city.

Each façade indicates, and also to some extent determines, the kind of habitation that exists behind it. Behind the long meandering curtain of wall there are, and are revealed to be, offices, shops, restaurants, the dwellings of the rich, workrooms, studios, clinics, call-houses, chapels, schools. And each habitation in turn determines, again to some extent at least, the kind of activity that goes on inside it. The sum of these activities is the life of the city.

Now, if we can argue from the façade to the kind of habitation and from the habitation to the kind of activity, then it follows that the nature of the city, conceived as a string of façades, exercises some kind of determination over the life of the city: over what can be done within it. But there is also a determination, though perhaps a weaker one, that the nature of the city exercises over the life of the citizen: over what *he* can do within it. And this follows from the fact that the façades occur in a certain order, according to the wisdom of the city's founders. If the citizen conforms to the conventions of the city, if he works respectably and lives appropriately, then the length of his day, the amount of travelling he does, his amusements, his friends, his food, will be, if not actually selected for him, then at least narrowly circumscribed, by the geography of the city, by this meandering string of façades, rich, mean, poor, palatial. Where he can eat in his lunch-hour and what, how tired he will be by the evening, whether he can ever go to a theatre, how much privacy he can hope to enjoy, how dirty his clothes will get in the course of the day and whether it's worth his while to care for his appearance: these are matters that determine a great deal of human life, and within the city they are going to be determined by the city.

When I say that the Teenager rejects the city as a solid encompassing environment, in large part what I mean is that he rejects just this determination. He sees no reason why his life, only lived once, should be determined by something in which he has had no say, from which he derives no benefit, and submission to which extinguishes energy, spontaneity, and excitement.

But it remains a fact that the means of expressing his revolt are strictly limited. As an extreme measure what he can do is try to create for himself a life which falls completely outside the life of the city conceived as a totality: his activity can be one for which there is no physical analogue in the lay-out of the city, for which there is no façade behind which it can properly occur. In bringing this about he will probably find himself a member of the so-called "criminal" classes: he will become a burglar, a ponce, a tart, a fence. With somewhat more luck, with the shrewdness to hold out against the blandishments of his friends and the subtler lure of his own fantasies, he may be able to achieve a precarious balance poised on the "dubious" fringe of society: watching the constant interchange between this and the criminal world, but never actually becoming part of it: engaged in pursuits which, just because they are not tied down to any single point in space, incur the suspicion of the respectable. He can become a barrow-boy, a driver, a street photographer, a dealer at several removes in stolen goods, a hustler for this or that.

Should he, however, be unwilling to assert his revolt so uncompromisingly, he has two ways left open to him of showing that he rejects the environment. In the first place, he can defy the geographical determination that the city would exercise over his life. Just because he works in one place and sleeps in another, he is not going to accept that his pleasures, his interests, his friends, should be selected from out of the range of attractions that these two localities have to offer. He can, that is, struggle to make the possibilities that are open to him co-extensive with those contained within the city at large: he may no longer want an activity that falls outside those which constitute the life of the city as such, but he sees no reason why he should not be allowed to choose freely within them. By bus ordinarily; by taxi when he's loaded; by long marches when he's with the gang, the clique, he forages into areas where most likely his parents had never set foot, and indeed knew of only with suspicion:

> One woman had never been outside the borough except for an odd visit to the "other end," as the West End of London is known locally. Another never left the borough except for the usual day-trip once a year to Southend. Yet another said "I only went out once when we went to Canvey just before the war. I felt very strange and lonely when I was there. I've never been out of Bethnal Green since, except once to go to Southend for the day." Many of the most rooted people do not talk about fares but about "riding fares," and while we do not know the origin of the term, in context it sometimes suggested that to pay a fare to travel anywhere was something outlandish and even a little daring.[2]

[2] Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957).

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By contrast the Teenager moves through his city, freely, like a sportsman along the hedges and lanes he knows so well: routing out his quarry.

Secondly, he can endeavour to act in a more direct way upon the environment itself: breaking the determination of the façades upon the life that goes on behind them. Habitations are altered beyond recognition, or put to uses for which they were never intended. A cellar becomes a club; a nonconformist chapel is turned into an all-night café; a sordid shop-front is decorated with record sleeves; streets that used to sleep quiet at night are filled with blaring music; pubs are given strip-lighting and juke-boxes; Coca-cola signs, girlie calendars, bull-fight posters, beer mats, pin-ups of pop singers, advertisements for flying cheap to Valetta or Dublin or Kingston Jamaica embellish coffee bars, and sharp shops, and clubs in basements, which every evening are heavily charged with that most fragrant and exotic of all smells, and back-bedrooms in W.11 or N.4 that this week have been converted into spielers and next week will be derelict or torn down.

But nowhere do the limitations of what the Teenager can achieve, the poverty, the inadequacy of the resources that he has at his disposal, reveal themselves more than in the attempt to bend the physical conditions in which he lives to his will and taste. At the very best he can touch merely the surface of the environment, dressing it up, according to this year's fashion, in clothes that will have fallen to pieces even before they've had time to get out of date. A coat of paint, a bar run up where there wasn't one before, some Italian mosaics, a fragment of trellis with imitation roses creeping over it, a suggestion of abroad, of France, of the cities of the American movies—that's about as far as his abilities or his desires will take him:

> My sixteen-year-old mind really lapped everything up. Two different coloured walls: pink and lavender, well, that was really something. Contemporary furniture—man, this is living.[3]

So speaks the hero of a recent novel, fascinating if only because it comes right out of the world of *Absolute Beginners*. No voice could better reveal the attitude I have been describing, the thoroughly sartorial conception of what it is to have somewhere where you live which you like.

But of course, to achieve anything even as superficial as this is rare, and here we have, I think, the real poignancy of this world, which MacInnes often suggests, though sometimes conceals. And that is that what is begun in reality has so often to be completed merely in fantasy. The kiddos are going to turn life into one great ball, they say, but the decorations in which the ball takes place resemble too often an impoverished Christmas. In rooms only half-painted, reeking of damp, with the plaster peeling off the walls, the boys and girls strike the poses of Elvis, of James Dean, of BB, of Belmondo; of the idols of the day, hard and soft. Who can they hope to deceive, and for how much longer? When will the dream break?

Meanwhile, up the opposite side of the street, there creep the advancing forces of that other great enemy of the urban environment, the most ruthless matricide of them all, the Developer. This one knows only too well what he wants, and he has the power and the unscrupulousness and the resources to achieve it. At his behest, houses, terraces, whole squares will disappear. Around the destruction a palisade will go up, nightly patrols by guards against breakers of the law and prowling teenagers. And eventually on the site new blocks will arise: not the fairy palaces, not the clean new cloud-kissers that the Absolute Beginner in his ecstatic vision took them to be, but meaningless repetitive strips of building with the modern idiom lying on them like wallpaper, enclosing no coherent space. The varied structure of the city, against which the Teenager in his dreams rebelled, is going, and its place will be taken by a new kind of deadly, soulless monotony, revealing the only dream of which the Developer shows himself still capable: the rage for money.

VI The Hip and the Delinquent

The social historian of 2062—for whose benefit we are all nowadays supposed to be writing—might in one quite important respect be badly misled by reading the London novels or these new essays of Colin MacInnes: and that is as to the extent of the movement which these books depict. For the impression MacInnes gives is that in 1956 or thereabouts the "kiddos" stormed the barricades of our society, the "conscripts" were routed, and life in England became clean, bright, and "sharp." And of course this isn't so. Quite apart from the well-entrenched forces of conventional taste and habit, there are innumerable teenagers who just aren't with "the teenage thing" at all: there are boys and girls setting out from school upon such life as our society offers them, who could by no stretch of the imagination be thought of as "absolute beginners." There are those who would like to be so, but aren't: those who live in unfavoured cities, or whose pay-packets

[3] Terry Taylor, *Baron's Court, All Change* (MacGibbon and Kee, 1961).

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aren't big enough, or whose parents aren't co-operative. There are those who look as though they are it, but aren't: boys with burned-in partings who are in favour of the birch or prefer Bing Crosby, girls who sit under the dryer reading old-time romantic slush. And then there are those who neither like it, nor look like it, nor are it.

Ray Gosling, who wrote an excellent pamphlet[4] last year about the Youth Service, full of ideas and true experience, has recently described one reaction to it:

> Why did you forget the ordinary people? You went for the raughting and the fringes and left us out. Didn't you think ordinary people were important? You painted a picture in dirt. I got the idea that you loved the dirt and wanted to make everything dirty, and that you had forgotten the ordinary people like us.[5]

MacInnes's picture, of course, isn't in dirt. On the contrary, it's in soap and water and verbena salts. But, then, that too is a kind of distortion.

MacInnes's picture of teenage life is distorted because he emphasises too heavily the "hip" element in it ("hip" that is, in the English, not the American, sense); just as the picture that T. R. Fyvel paints of it in *The Insecure Offenders*[6] is distorted because *it* emphasises too heavily the "criminal" or "delinquent" element. But if we have to choose between the two—which in a sense we don't, because MacInnes's novels neither are nor are supposed to be works of sociology—I am convinced that the MacInnes distortion is far less misleading than the Fyvel distortion: for three reasons.

In the first place, the concept of "criminal," where this means someone who has broken the law, and been indicted and convicted for it, seems to bring together so many disparate ideas as not to pick out a class of genuine interest at all. The facts of indictment and conviction indicate only the relative efficiency of the police and the criminal: so that if criminal statistics show an increase this might mean no more than that there has been, say, a fall in the educational level of those who break the law or, alternatively, an increase in the unscrupulousness of those who give evidence against them. (I suppose that it was for some such reason as this that a junior minister, who should know, said to me recently that there was no crime wave—and then looked pained by my naïvety when I asked him if he was going to say so.)

Secondly, even the mere fact of having broken the law—let us add, a sensible and reasonable law—does not seem to be all that significant a matter in isolation, and certainly is not very revealing psychologically or culturally about a class of people. For what we need to know is the state of mind in which the crime was done, or the fantasies from which it derives. Now, if I am right in assimilating the nomadic, rootless existence of the Teenager to a kind of institutionalised form of the manic life, then this would suggest that a great deal of juvenile crime would be of the sort in which the actual element of violence was not properly or thoroughly admitted. And certainly reports seem to confirm this. The dressing-up for the crime, the choice of weapons, the tracking of the victim, the excitement of the actual coshing or slashing, the get-away, the evasion from the pursuers—all these would be matters that were fully acknowledged and enjoyed, and might even be the subject of pride or boasting. But the actual pain inflicted, the cruel suffering of the victim: this would be denied. Indeed, a parallel immediately suggests itself, in that perhaps much juvenile crime discharges for one section of society the same emotional function as blood-sports do for another. If this is so, then until we are quite sure about the proper equation between human and animal suffering, perhaps we should not be so outraged by the one activity while we still bestow respectability upon the other.

Finally, I think that the section of Teenage life upon which, as we have seen, MacInnes concentrates—the "hip" element—can in one way most certainly justify the heavy weight of attention it receives. For socially it has a significance quite out of proportion to its actual size. The number of "kiddos" who get their clothes from Cecil Gee's, who hang around Ronnie Scott's or go jiving up at Manor House, who buy LPs and go abroad for their holidays, who are the great consumers in the Common Market of juvenile taste, are few enough in number, but they fulfil an exemplary role within the society of their contemporaries. Their habits, their tastes, their pleasures, their attitudes are something to be admired and even, within certain limits, to be copied. They form, in other words, an aristocracy: and, what is particularly interesting, an aristocracy whose superiority is recognised not only by those who share common social origins with them, but to an increasing extent by those who have social origins that are superior to theirs, by those who go to grammar school or have good jobs to look forward to. The Absolute Beginner bids fair to be the hero not only of the Non-starter but also of the High Flyer.

[4] Ray Gosling, *Lady Albemarle's Boys* (Fabian Society, 1961).

[5] "The Importance of Hogwash." *Stand*, Vol. 5, No. 3.

[6] T. R. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders* (Chatto & Windus, 1961).

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AND IN ANOTHER WAY, the word "aristocracy" as applied to these hip teenagers is peculiarly suitable. For it does justice not merely to the social role that they fill, as people to be looked up to and played up to, but also to the actual attitudes that they exemplify, and that then become diffused via their admirers. For these are, as MacInnes shows, by and large, traditional aristocratic attitudes.

There is the profound sense of loyalty to one's peers and companions. There is the unflagging pursuit of pleasure, particularly in its more luxurious or extravagant forms. There is the indifference to general moral considerations and the substitution for them of a complex, labyrinthine, and ultimately arbitrary code of correctness. And, finally and most important of all, there is the detached contemptuous attitude towards anything in society or the environment that thwarts or frustrates one: so that whatever does not straightway conform to one's will is simply ignored—not rejected, not rebelled against, but left to remain as it is, in icy scorn.

A hundred years ago Baudelaire attributed to his hero, the *dandy*, whom he saw as the last survivor of an older order holding out against the rising tide of democracy, *"l'air froid qui vient de l'inébranlable résolution de ne pas être ému."* Nowhere does the Absolute Beginner show more clearly *his* aristocratic descent than in his *"air froid,"* in the cult of "coolness."

VII Coolness and Class

THE HISTORY of "coolness," as an attitude of the mid-20th century, is something that remains to be written. Originating in the great North American cities, amongst the lovers of a new music, it has crossed seas and frontiers, and penetrated every country that possesses an affluent or a bohemian youth. It is celebrated in the novels of Kerouac and Pasolini; in films from France and Poland and Japan; and in the cafés and bars and jazz clubs of every American or Americanised city in the world.

And the forms it has assumed are as varied as its geographical progress. At one end of the scale it has become infected with a particularly degraded form of mysticism, popularised Zen, and under its influence has sunk into mere quietism. At the other end of the scale it has been ready to ally itself with certain movements of protest, provided that these are both extreme in themselves and also quite disconnected from the existing institutions of social criticism: such as the various "peace movements" that swept the world in the 1950s, or the campaign against racial discrimination and segregation. What coolness is, however, consistent and unambiguous in rejecting is systematic, established, practical politics, particularly where these presuppose a prior commitment, such as membership of a social class. Accordingly it is here, in this context, that the significance of the Absolute Beginner as a radical phenomenon can seriously be called in question.

"In the days when I was a teenager," Colin MacInnes writes in an essay called *Pop Songs and Teenagers*, "it was impossible to step outside your class unless you joined the army, or went to jail: but now, the kids seem to do this quite effortlessly." And in the mouth of the Absolute Beginner himself, he puts the following speech:

> "You poor old prehistoric monster," I exclaimed. "I do *not* reject the working classes, and I do *not* belong to the upper classes, for one and the same simple reason, namely, that neither of them interest me in the slightest, never have done, never will do. Do try to understand that, clobbo! I'm not just interested in the whole class crap that seems to needle you and all the tax-payers—needle you all, whichever side of the tracks you live on, or suppose you do."

And in speaking like this, the Absolute Beginner speaks, of course, not only for himself, not only for his peers, but for, say, every sincere reader of *The Queen*, for every upper-class young girl who is nauseated by conventional snobbery, who despises dances and dinner parties, and who hums a pop-song to herself every time she rides alone in a taxi.

But is this really the end of class, or just of class-consciousness? Are we entitled to see in this new attitude to the social situation anything more than the reversal of that process in which Marx placed all *his* revolutionary hopes: the process, namely, whereby the subjective element of awareness becomes superimposed upon the objective element of fact? Or can it really be said that the Absolute Beginner in his new habits, his new tastes, his new ethos, above all in his scornful rejection of the old ones, really has done something, along lines along which others will do more, and after them others still more, to dismantle the ancient system of oppression?

I AM MYSELF FAR from convinced that some of the more hideous aspects of our system, some of the worst excesses of social and cultural exploitation, could not be removed simply by the victims' refusing to accept the indignities thrust upon them. Committed though I am to the cause of reform, I do see that there are cases where pretty much the same effect could be achieved by the alternative method of rejection.

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But, ultimately, I cannot help feeling that the base upon which the Absolute Beginner stands as he hurls his message of scorn at society is too narrow for us to hope for much from his gesture.

For, in the first place, in order to secure a foothold here, a great deal is required of one in the way of talent, and flair, and toughness. One of the tragic aspects of our system, which goes, I fear, largely unreflected in MacInnes's novels, is that those who are not chosen to enter society by the class-ladder, are likely to have had so much energy and self-respect drained away from them in the process that they will be ineligible to enter the classless society. The world of the Absolute Beginner is that of the unconventionally successful: is it not a piece of unjustified social optimism to identify this, unreservedly, with the world of the conventionally unsuccessful?

Secondly, this world is not merely peculiarly hard of entry, it is also too painfully, too pathetically, indeed ineluctably, easy of exit. Twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two—how old is the oldest teenager? Age—if not, before age, marriage through love or bad luck—will have carried him away, and not just slowly, gradually, out of the protected shallows of youth into the open sea, like with all of us, but abruptly, harshly, as over a precipice. The acquisition of a home of his own, of children, all the tiring and expensive responsibilities of maturity produce a sharp break in the life of the ordinary working-class or lower middle-class boy comparable only to the second and even more brutal decline in his standard of living that lies in store for him on retirement. And the question arises: How much can he take with him? How many of the dreams and ideals, how much of the shabby generalised poetry, how much of the suffused excitement and the synthetic sense of adventure, which are so typical of the Absolute Beginner's way of life, will continue to be of help to him when he is no longer with the group?

I put this merely as a question—as indeed MacInnes does. Nor do I think it any overwhelming indictment of anything in life, particularly if it happens to be highly pleasurable at the time, that it has no residual use when it ceases to be directly present or experienced—after all, most of what goes on in schools is, we ought to admit, precisely of this character—but it is, nevertheless, as well to realise when this is so.

And finally there is the fact, well enough rehearsed by now, that the base upon which the Absolute Beginner takes his stand and from which he utters his rejection of the system, is itself a product of the system he rejects: an export article made for him, it is true, but "for him" only in the sense of "with his purchasing power in mind."

On this aspect of Teenage culture, as essentially a commercial entity, everyone has by now had his say: Hoggart and Crosland, Stuart Hall and Dan Jacobson, Raymond Williams and Ray Gosling. So that not merely is there little left to say, but in the course of the discussion the words in which it has been conducted have become so rubbed, so bereft of sense, that it is difficult to be certain exactly what has been said.

What exactly, for instance, is the pejorative force of the word "commercial" or "commercialised?" Why is it so clearly linked with poorness of quality? Profit-maximising entrepreneurs may import Italian shirts and French tricots—but does this mean that they are not an improvement upon the blue pin-stripe and the pyjama-stripe shirt of the 1930s? For all I know, tough ambitious backers may be behind Helen Shapiro, but she could yet become, for all the relevance of that, the Edith Piaf of London. In many of the arguments on this score, the links seem to me missing.

All I should like to do at this stage is to add one small point. I have said elsewhere what I think is really the worst and most dangerous aspect of mass culture, and one moreover which is certainly linked with its highly commercial provenance, and that is its tendency to encourage and to reinforce a highly relativistic attitude on the part of those whom it serves. The charge I am considering is not one of quality, but relates to the way in which quality, high or low, gets ignored, and the consumer's attitude is increasingly directed away from the question whether the product is good to whether it is fashionable, whether it's the latest, whether it will go. Questions of mode or fashion come altogether to supplant questions of taste and value. Consider, for instance, a programme like *Juke Box Jury*, and think what the panel is asked. They are asked not, you will note, whether this or that song is good or bad, but whether it's "hit material" or a fail; whether, that is, other people will like it, not whether *they* like it. And in the conduct of this programme we may see mass culture holding up a mirror to itself: here is the way in which it desires to be taken. A vital and immediate consequence of this is that any improvement or equally any deterioration that might occur in the quality of what is produced, a matter upon which intellectual critics and commentators concentrate so heavily, will not have the importance, the significance that they attribute to it. For inherent in the very conditions of production and

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presentation of mass culture is a tendency to obscure any such variations and to flatten everything out into a uniform continuum, in which the only thing still discriminable is the age or date of the product. It should be evident how an attitude of this kind on the part of the consumer has marked commercial advantages for the producer since it tends to make all the objects of mass culture highly expendable and to bring about a situation resembling as closely as possible that of continuous consumption.

And now I want to point out a certain congruity that I believe exists between the desire on the part of the producers of mass culture to realise this state of affairs and the kind of psychological attitude that I have attributed to one of their most significant clients, the Teenager. For the desire for new and changing gratifications, the engrossment in the fleeting surface of existence, the inability to recognise what is bad or shoddy or unsatisfying as such, are precisely those mental conditions which the purveyor of commercial entertainment would most wish to see institutionalised. Freud has used the term "feast" in connection with the manic ideal: wishing, amongst other things, to contrast the immense assiduousness and energy with which objects of pleasure are pursued and accumulated and the comparative indifference with which they are enjoyed, squandered, spoilt. When the Absolute Beginner expresses his desire to make a ball out of life, the kind of ball he has in mind, I suggest, is a feast.

I WISH TO MAKE quite clear now, if I have not done so before, that in none of this am I talking of individual psychology. The experience of the individual, environmental and in phantasy, will ultimately determine his own desires and attitudes and proclivities. But it is not incompatible with this to think of certain general factors in society, institutions whether of an organisational or of a cultural kind, that tend to encourage, to facilitate, certain defences to which the individual, in dealing with his private anxieties, might be inclined to resort. And, conversely, there are certain social reforms that could be brought about which could have the effect of removing or at least of attenuating such undesirable factors in the environment. In the present case the most significant reforms must lie in the educational field. No one who has thought at all about the problems of our present society could, for instance, disagree with the analysis provided by Fyvel of what is wrong with our degraded system of education and of the evils that it encourages. There is an only too projectible path that runs from the sense of rejection, through the reactivation of anxiety, to the attractions of the manic state. It was in the provision of circuses even more than in the supply of bread that the psychological genius of Rome's oppressors showed itself.

VIII Unreality

Elle s'acheta un plan de Paris, et, du bout de son doigt, sur la carte, elle faisait des courses dans la capitale....

IT IS HARD to suppress the idea—and certainly none of the books that I have been considering give one any reason for doing so—that in the imagination of the Absolute Beginner the city takes on this quality of unreality which Flaubert evokes: the quality, not just of something unreal or non-existent, but of something unrealised, something specific enough in dream or reverie, capable of obsessing the waking hours, but lacking substantial form. For Emma Bovary in Tostes such a conception of Paris is in its sad way comprehensible enough: but to entertain a corresponding conception of London in Soho or in Notting Hill, to divest the city in which one actually lives and moves of physical embodiment and to turn it into a succession of flickering images, to convert one's own day-to-day experience into something like the surface of an Impressionist painting, in which the subject-matter is provided not by another place, another time, but by here and now—this is a more extreme malady.

In a highly speculative essay[7] Adrian Stokes has habituated us to the idea that much of the enfolding and encompassing character of "modern" painting can be attributed to the failure of modern urban architecture to discharge for us its traditional function in this respect. I want to go beyond this and suggest that what is art's gain (if that is what it is) is life's loss. The failure of the city to serve any longer as a corporeal symbol has left innumerable city-dwellers without any clear idea of how to dwell within it. No longer like the blood in the body, they threaten to become the maggots in the corpse.

And should it now be objected that I have unduly dramatised the situation by concentrating upon a small untypical nomadic fringe, I should like to ask who thinks that those who in increasing numbers stay at home at night and stare at TV have solved any better than MacInnes's hero, or for that matter Fyvel's villain, the secular problem of how to live in a civilised way in a city?

[7] Adrian Stokes, *Three Essays on the Painting of Our Time* (Tavistock Publications, 1961).

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F. R. Leavis

By George Steiner

No ceremony. Only a don, spare of voice and stature, but flamelike in his pale intensity, leaving a lectern in a grey Cambridge hall and brushing out the door with a step characteristically sinuous, lithe, and unheeding.

Yet when Dr. Leavis quits Mill Lane for the last time, an era will have ended in the history of English sensibility. No less, perhaps, than that of Wittgenstein or R. H. Tawney, who like himself have sharply altered the inward cadence of intelligence, Leavis's retirement, the cessation of his teaching, marks an intricate, controversial chapter in the record of consciousness.

That a literary critic should have done so much to re-shape the tenor of spirit in his time, that he should have enforced on the progress of feeling much of his own unrelenting, abstract gait—the man walks in the outward guise of his thought—is, of itself, an arresting fact. In the vulgate sense literary criticism is not that important. Most critics feed upon the substance of literature; they are outriders, hangers-on, or shadows to lions. Writers write books; critics write about books in an eternity of second-hand. The distinction is immense. Where criticism endures, it does so either because it is a counterpart to creation, because the poetic force of a Coleridge and a T. S. Eliot gives to their judgment the authority of private experience, or because it marks a signal moment in the history of ideas. The vitalising power of the *Poetics* is historical; it depends only in minor part on our awareness of the works Aristotle is actually citing. The great mass of criticism is ephemeral, bordering on journalism or straightforward literary history, on a spurt of personal impression scarcely sustained, or on the drab caution of traditional, erudite assent. Very few critics survive in their own right. Those that do—and how many can one add to Dr. Johnson, Lessing, and Belinsky?—make of criticism an act of pivotal social intelligence. They work outward from the particular literary instance to the far reaches of moral and political argument.

This has been radically the case with Leavis. Writing of *Ulysses*, Ezra Pound declared: "We are governed by words, the laws are graven in words, and literature is the sole means of keeping these words living and accurate." Leavis would add that only criticism can see to it that literature does the job. Behind this vision of criticism as "the central humanity," as the exhibitor and guardian of values which are no less moral and social than they are technical, lies a complex, articulate theory of the critical process.

To Leavis, the critic is the complete reader: "the ideal critic is the ideal reader." He realises to the full the experience given in the words of the poet or the novelist. He aims at complete responsiveness, at a kind of total poised vulnerability of consciousness in the encounter with the text. He proceeds with an attention which is close and stringent, yet also provisional, and at all times susceptible to revaluation. Judgment arises from response; it does not initiate it:

> The critic's aim is, first, to realise as sensitively and completely as possible this or that which claims his attention; and a certain valuing is implicit in the realising. As he matures in experience of the new thing he asks, explicitly and implicitly: "Where does this come? How does it stand in relation to . . . ? How relatively important does it seem?" And the organisation into which it settles as a constituent in becoming "placed" is an organisation of similarly "placed" things, things that have found their bearings with regard to one another, and not a theoretical

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system or a system determined by abstract considerations.

The critical judgment (the "placing") is put forward with an attendant query: "This is so, isn't it?" And what the critic hopes for is qualified assent, a "Yes, but..." which will compel him to re-examine or refine his own response and lead to fruitful dialogue. This notion of dialogue is central to Leavis. No less than the artist—indeed, more so—the critic is in need of a public. Without it the act of ideal reading, the attempt to re-create the work of art in the critical sensibility is doomed to becoming arbitrary impression or mere dictate. There must exist or be trained within the community a body of readers seeking to achieve in vital concert a mature response to literature. Only then can the critic work with that measure of consent which makes disagreement creative. Language itself is a supreme act of community. The poem has its particular existence in a "third realm," at a complex, unstable distance between the poet's private use of words and the shape of these same words in current speech. To be realised critically the work of literature must find its complete reader; but that reader (the critic) can only quicken and verify his response if a comparable effort at insight is occurring somewhere around him.

SUCH EFFORT bears directly on the fortunes of society. The commanding axiom in Leavis's life-work is the conviction that there is a close relation between a man's capacity to respond to art and his general fitness for humane existence. That capacity can be woken and richened by the critic. Literacy of feeling is a pre-condition to sane judgment in human affairs: "thinking about political and social matters ought to be done by minds of some real literary education, and done in an intellectual climate informed by a vital literary culture." Where a society does not have within it a significant contemporary literature and the parallel exercise of critical challenge, "the 'mind' (and mind includes memory) is not fully alive." In short, Leavis's conception of literary criticism is, above all else, a plea for a live, humane social order.

Hence the tremendous importance he ascribes to the idea of a university. Like Newman (who is one of the really distinctive influences on his style and manner), Leavis regards the ideal university as the root and mould of those energies of spirit which can keep the body-politic functioning in a sane, creative way. All his criticism has sprung from the context of teaching. The words which come at the close of the preface to *Revaluation* are meant literally:

> The debt that I wish to acknowledge is to those with whom I have, during the past dozen years, discussed literature as a "teacher": if I have learnt anything about the methods of profitable discussion I have learnt it in collaboration with them.

If he execrates the "academic mind," losing no occasion to pour upon it the vials of his prophetic scorn, it is because Leavis believes that Oxford and Cambridge, in their present guise, have largely betrayed the true, indispensable functions of teaching. But he has dwelt within their walls in angry devotion.

MUCH OF THE FINEST in Leavis's performance is unrecapturable, being the sum of a generation of actual teaching, of unstinting commitment to the art of broken discourse between tutor and pupil. Yet his impact extends formidably beyond the courts of Downing. He has made a banal academic title inseparably a part of his own name; the Muses have conferred only two doctorates, his and Dr. Johnson's. Like certain writers of narrow, characteristic force, Leavis has set aside from the currency of language a number of words and turns of phrase for his singular purpose. Strong use has made these words nearly his property; *ils portent la griffe du maître*:

> discrimination . . . centrality . . . poise . . . responsibility . . . tactics . . . enforcement . . . realisation . . . presentment . . . vitalising . . . performance . . . assent . . . robustness. . . .

"Close, delicate wholeness"; "pressure of intelligence"; "concrete realisation"; "achieved actuality"—are phrases which carry Leavis's signature as indelibly as "high seriousness" bears that of Arnold.

The list is worth examining. It does not rely on jargon, on the shimmering technical obscurities which mar so much of American New Criticism. It is a spiky, grey, abstract parlance, heavy with exact intent. A style which tells us that Tennyson's verse "doesn't offer, characteristically, any very interesting local life for inspection," or that "Shakespeare's marvellous faculty of intense local realisation is a faculty of realising the whole locally" can be parodied with fearful ease. But what matters is to understand why Leavis "writes badly," why he insists on presenting his case in a grim suet of prose.

His refusal of elegance is the expression of a deep, underlying Puritanism. Leavis detests the kind of "fine" writing which by flash of phrase or lyric surge of argument obscures thinness of meaning or unsoundness of logic. He distrusts as spurious frivolity all that would embroider on the naked march of thought. His manner is so

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easy to parody precisely because there lies behind it so unswerving a preoccupation with the matter in hand, so constant a refusal to be distracted by grace of touch. It has a kind of noble ugliness and points a finger of Puritan scorn at the false glitter of Pater.

BUT THE SOURCE of Leavis's style, of that bleak, hectoring yet ultimately hypnotising tone, may lie even deeper. One striking fact distinguishes him from all other major critics. So far as I am aware, he has never wished or striven to be a writer—a poet, novelist, or playwright. In the criticism of Dryden, Coleridge, and Arnold, there is an immediate neighbourhood of art. In Edmund Wilson there lurks a disappointed novelist. Sainte-Beuve yielded to his critical genius in blackness of soul, having failed to match the fiction and lyric verse of his romantic peers. John Crowe Ransom, R. P. Blackmur, Allen Tate, are poets who turned to criticism either in defence or elaboration of their own view of poetry, or when the vein of invention had run dry. In most great critics (perhaps even in Johnson) there is a writer *manqué*.

This has two effects. It can make of criticism a minor art, an attempt to achieve, by force of style, something like the novel or drama which the critic has failed to produce successfully. Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Sainte-Beuve's critical portraits, Edmund Wilson's *To the Finland Station*, have in them strong relics of poetic form. Blackmur's critical essays are often poems arrested. This can produce a grace of persuasion to which Leavis hardly comes near. But he would not wish to. For it can also entail a subtle disloyalty to the critical purpose. Where it becomes a substitute for "creative writing," where it shows the scars of lost dreams, criticism tends towards rhetoric, self-revelation, shapely aphorism. It loses its grip on the objects before it and turns to an unsteady mirror held up by the critic to his own ambitions or humility.

Leavis conveys persistently the absolute conviction that criticism is a central, life-giving pursuit. It need offer no apology for not being something else. Though in a manner radically different from that of the poet, it creates possibilities of apprehension and a consensus of perceived values without which poetry could not be sustained. To see Dr. Leavis at his lectern, compact and indrawn as if wary of some inner challenge, yet richly communicative to his listeners, is to observe a man doing precisely the job he wishes to do. And it is a job he regards as immensely important.

What has he made of it?

UNLIKE COLERIDGE or Hegel, Leavis has not initiated a formal theory of art; he has not sought to re-define the epistemology of æsthetic judgment. He regards the generalising, abstract mode of philosophy as sharply distinct from the specific re-creative perception which is the job of the literary critic; philosophic training might lead to

> blunting of edge, blurring of focus and muddled misdirection of attention: consequences of queering one discipline with the habits of another. The business of the literary critic is to attain a peculiar completeness of response and to observe a peculiarly strict relevance in developing his response into commentary; he must be on his guard against abstracting improperly from what is in front of him and against any premature or irrelevant generalising—of it or from it.... There is, I hope, a chance that I may in this way have advanced theory, even if I haven't done the theorising. I know that the cogency and precision I have aimed at are limited; but I believe that any approach involves limitations, and that it is by recognising them and working within them that one may hope to get something done.

The "general ideas" behind Leavis's criticism are derived, in large part, from T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, I. A. Richards, and William Empson. By the time he began his own revaluation of the history of English poetry, Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Robert Graves had already proclaimed the quality of the new. The attitudes which inspired *The Oxford Book of English Verse* to give Donne only as much space as Bulwer Lytton and less than a third as much as Herrick, or which made of Bridges a major figure who had, in munificence of heart, been patron to the eccentric thwarted talent of Hopkins, were already under critical fire. After *Prufrock* and the first Pound and Eliot essays, it was becoming increasingly difficult to regard Tennyson or Swinburne as the sole or pre-eminent forces directing English poetry. A colder air was blowing.

Leavis's re-orientation of critical focus—his stress on that lineage of intelligence and realised form which goes from Shakespeare and the Metaphysicals to Pope, Blake, Hopkins, and Eliot—is rooted in the change of sensibility occurring in the 1920s and early '30s. What he has done is to give that change its most precise and cogent critical justification. His mastery lies not in the general devising, but in the particular instance.

HERE THERE is much that will live among the classic pages of criticism. Wherever one turns in the impressive array of Leavis's writings, one is arrested by the exhilarating presence of an intelligence superbly exact,

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and having within reach formidable resources of historical and textual knowledge. That intelligence is brought into close, subtle commerce with the poem in an act of total awareness which is, in the best instances, near to art. Leavis is difficult to quote from because the progress of response is so continuous and dense-woven. Yet certain moments do stand out for sheer brilliance and propriety of gathered insight.

The reading of Hopkins' *Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves* (from *New Bearings in English Poetry*) is unusual in that it shows Leavis re-creating the sense and impact of the poem not only by responsive judgment, but by a kind of lyric counterpart:

> The trees are no longer the beautiful, refreshing things of daylight; they have turned fantastically strange, hard and cruel, "beak-leaved" suggesting the cold, hard light, steely like the gleam of polished tools, against which they appear as a kind of damascene-work ("damask") on a blade. Then follows the anguished surrender to the realisation:
>
> *... Oúr tale, O oúr oracle! / Lét life, wáned, ah lét life wind*
> *Off hér one skéined stained véined variety / upon áll on twó spools; párt, pen, páck*
> *Now her áll in twó flocks, twó folds—black, white; / right, wrong ...*
>
> The run of alliterations, rimes and assonances suggests the irresistible poignancy of the realisation. The poem ends with a terrible effect as of unsheathed nerves grinding upon one another. The grinding might at first be taken to be merely that of "right" against "wrong," the inner conflict of spirit and flesh, and the pain that which the believer knows he must face, the simple pain of renunciation. Yet we are aware of a more subtle anguish and a more desperate plight.

Criticism is, necessarily, comparison. But only a great critic is able to make of the act of preference, of the "placing" of one writer above another, an exercise of equal illumination. The sustained, gradually deepening comparison of Pope and Dryden in *Revaluation* is one of Leavis's master strokes. Setting the *Dunciad* beside *Mac Flecknoe*, Leavis notes that

> above every line of Pope we can imagine a tensely flexible and complex curve, representing the modulation, emphasis, and changing tone and tempo of the voice in reading; the curve varying from line to line and the lines playing subtly against one another. The verse of *Mac Flecknoe*, in the comparison, is both slack and monotonous; again and again there are awkward runs and turns, unconvinced and unconvincing, requiring the injected rhetorical conviction of the declaimer to carry them off.

Yet at once, the qualifying mechanism of Leavis's approach intrudes. The comparison "*is* unfair: Dryden's effects are all for the public ear." Read in a spirit appropriate to their intent, Dryden's satiric poems were "magnificently effective." But the spirit which Pope demands is something different; behind his immediate effects lies an organisation finer, more inward than that required or exhibited by Dryden. Indeed, it is his limitations which make of Dryden the "great representative poet of the later 17th century." He belongs entirely to the community of reigning taste. There is between him and the sensibility of the time none of the distance, critical or nostalgic, that forces upon Marvell or Pope a greater delicacy of organisation: "Dryden is the voice of his age." The whole analysis is masterly; it shows how Leavis reads with what Klee would have called "the thinking eye."

That eye is at work again, though narrowed, in Leavis's examination of Milton's style: "He exhibits a feeling *for* words rather than a capacity for feeling *through* words ... habituation could not sensitise a medium so cut off from speech—speech that belongs to the emotional and sensory texture of actual living and is in resonance with the nervous system." I believe that Leavis is wrong, that Milton (like Joyce) built of language a realness no less coherent or filled with the roughage of experience than is common speech—but the cogency and challenge of Leavis's case is manifest.

No single passage illustrates more compactly the peculiar genius of Leavis's criticism than the close of his essay on Swift:

> It is not merely that he had an Augustan contempt for metaphysics; he shared the shallowest complacencies of Augustan common sense: his irony might destroy these, but there is no conscious criticism.
>
> He was, in various ways, curiously unaware—the reverse of clairvoyant. He is distinguished by the intensity of his feelings, not by insight into them, and he certainly does not impress us as a mind in possession of its experience.
>
> We shall not find Swift remarkable for intelligence if we think of Blake.

The judgment is formidable for comprehensiveness, for coolness and finality of tone, for sheer implication of evidence marshalled and weighed. The "mind in possession of its experience"—here a purely critical note—takes on pertinent, sombre precision if we recall that Swift's intellect fell into the literal possession of madness. But there is more: the power of the verdict is gathered in the final touch, in the evocation of Blake, placed so designedly as the last word. The *rapprochement* of Blake and Swift is of itself superb criticism. Here it sets a seal of relative dimension, of comparable but unequal

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greatness. Only those who have themselves wrestled with the task of trying to say something fresh or perceptive about established classics, will fully realise how much there is of preliminary response, of close, unbroken thought, behind Leavis's concise assurance.

UNDOUBTEDLY, Leavis's principal achievement is his critique of the English novel. *The Great Tradition* is one of those very rare books of literary comment (one thinks of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* or Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*) that have re-shaped the inner landscape of taste. Anyone dealing seriously with the development of English fiction must start, even if in disagreement, from Leavis's proposals. Whereas much of what Leavis argued about poetry, moreover, was already being said around him, his treatment of the novel has only one precedent—the essays and prefaces of Henry James. Like James, but with a more deliberate intent of order and completeness, Leavis has brought to bear on the novel that closeness of reading and expectation of form reserved previously for the study of poetry or poetic drama.

Now every book reviewer or undergraduate is able to mouth insights about the "stature" of Jane Austen, the "mature art" of George Eliot, or the "creative wealth" of intelligence in *The Portrait of a Lady*. To-day it would seem ludicrous or wilfully eccentric to deny that *The Secret Sharer* or *Women in Love* are works of consummate art and classics of imagined life. But the very triumph of it should not make us forget the novelty, the unflinching audacity of Leavis's revaluation. Even where we challenge his list for ranking or omission, our sense of the novel as form, of its responsibility to moral perception and "vivid essential record," is that defined by Leavis's treatment. The assertion that after the decline of the epic and of verse drama the prose novel has concentrated the major energies in western literature—an assertion put forward provisionally by Flaubert, Turgenev, and James—is now a commonplace. It was not so when Leavis first focused on a chapter in *Middlemarch* or a paragraph in *Nostromo* the same kind of total apprehension exhibited in relation to Shakespeare or Donne. The mere suggestion (at present nearly a cliché) that there is in *Heart of Darkness* a realisation of evil comparable to the study of diminishing moral awareness in, say, *Macbeth*, has behind it a revolution in criticism. More than any man except James, Leavis has caused that revolution.

ONLY IN PART by his actual writings; the impact has been that of a *persona*. Like Péguy, Leavis has stood out against the climate of the age in a stance of harried isolation, partially real, partially strategic. I remember waiting for those grey, austerely wrapped numbers of *Scrutiny* as one waits for a bottle flung into the ravening sea. Inevitably, by their grey garb, by the angular tightness of print and page, they conveyed the image of a prophet, surrounded by a tiny, imperilled guard of the elect, expounding and disseminating his acrid truths by bent of will and privation. As a schoolboy, I sent in my subscription with a feeling of embarrassed awe, with a sense of conspiratorial urgency, as if there was food and fuel to be bought so as to keep going an enterprise of eminent danger. In a time of fantastic intellectual cheapness, of unctuous pseudo-culture and sheer indifference to values—in the century of the book club, the digest, and the hundred great ideas on the instalment plan—Leavis's "necessary attitude of absolute intransigence" has had an exemplary, moving force. But he has sustained that attitude at a cruel psychological cost.

He has had to define, and in significant measure, create for himself "the Enemy." Like a fabled, heraldic monster, the Enemy has many heads. They include the Sunday papers and *The Guardian* and all dons who write for them; the *Times Literary Supplement*, Mr. Pryce-Jones and his father (who enters the myth of vituperation in an obscure, recurrent fashion); the Third Programme "intellectuals" and the *entourage* of the *New Statesman*; the British Council and ENCOUNTER; Mr. John Hayward, Professor C. S. Lewis, Lord David Cecil, and all who divide the study and teaching of literature with the pursuit of elegance or science fiction; and, of late, pre-eminent among hydra-heads, C. P. Snow. The Enemy represents cosiness, frivolity, mundane cliques, the uses of culture for mutual adulation or warmth. He incarnates "the currency values of Metropolitan literary society and the associated University milieux." The Enemy creates philosophic giants such as Mr. Colin Wilson in a Sunday morning only to trample on them when the wind turns. He propagates the notion that Virginia Woolf was a major intellect or that the life-blood of English thought pulses in the Athenaeum, in the silvery grace of All Souls, or in Printing House Square. The Enemy is the Establishment of the mind. His brow is middle and his tone is suave.

BEHIND this contrived dragon there *is* a certain complex reality. Being geographically compact, English intellectual life is sharply susceptible to the pressures of club and cabal; the artifice of renown can be swiftly conjured or revoked. In small waters sharks can be made to pass for momentary leviathans. It is also true

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that there is between the universities and the world of press, magazine, and radio an alliance of brisk vulgarisation. An unusual number of academics have a flair for showmanship; too often, ideas which are, in fact, intricate, provisional, and raw to the throat, are thrown to the public as if they were bouquets. Watching some of the more brilliant performers at work, one would scarcely suppose that thought and scholarship are a rare, lonely, often self-consuming exercise of the soul when it is at full, painful stretch. Above all, there *is* in the English intellectual and artistic establishment a dangerous bias towards personal charm, towards understatement and amateur grace. The judgments of critics and Fellowship electors are too often shadowed by the complex, hardly indefinable yet deep-rooted criteria of social acceptance. The "good chap," the man one would care to dine with, glides smoothly to the top. The awkward, spiky, passionate genius—whether he be a great historian of politics, the inventor of the jet, or the author of *The Rainbow*—fits ill into the soft grooves of the great common room. The corridors of power or official sponsorship are closed to his obtrusive, tactless intensity.

Unquestionably, Leavis has suffered under the bland claw of coterie culture. And he may be right in his fierce, nonconformist belief that the possibilities of a genuinely educated community —a community able to judge and echo what is radical and serious in art—are being constantly eroded by the "near-culture" of the Brains Trust and the Sunday review. At a time when he was already being widely recognised (particularly in America) as the most compelling voice in the teaching of literature, Leavis found among his own university colleagues little but hostility or amused distaste. Like Péguy's *Cahiers de la quinzaine*, which alone match it in sustained integrity and wealth of provocation, *Scrutiny* was made possible by an utter expense of private energy. Unable to pay its contributors, receiving no official support, it was passed under silence by those (*i.e.*, the British Council) who were seeking to define to the world what was most vital in English culture. The first, and so far the only, gathering from its pages was made in America, on a purely private basis, by Eric Bentley.

Yet between these facts and the legend of self and society in which Leavis has encased his spirit there is a wide, tragic gap. As if out of some essential solitude, he has conjured up a detailed melodrama of persecution and neglect, of conspiracy and betrayal. Though surrounded by disciples who ape even what is most ephemeral in his mannerisms, though approached from many lands by those who hear and acclaim him, Leavis clings tenaciously to the mask of the pariah. He alludes to his endurance at Cambridge as a stroke of occult good fortune, as an oversight by the Enemy. He has in the past refused invitations from America lest dark malignity achieve its ends during his absence. Though a number of distinguished critics have been among his students and sought to carry on his own vision (Turnell, D. A. Traversi, Marius Bewley, L. C. Knights), there is hardly one with whom Leavis has not broken. Though he claims that he invites no more than qualified, challenging assent, Leavis has come to demand, perhaps unconsciously, complete loyalty to his creed. The merest doubt or deviation is heresy, and is soon followed by excommunication from the Downing kirk. Thus, although he is one of the greatest teachers of the age, he leaves behind few representatives of what is most vital in his manner. There are those who can mimic his lashing tone, his outward austerities and turns of phrase. But like the rows of students who snicker, in drilled fidelity, at every rasping mention of "Sunday papers," Leavis's immediate followers do him little honour. They merely bark and fang upon the heels of his greatness.

But it is not the personal commitment to artificial or obsolete polemics, it is not the charring expense of nerve or intellect that matter. These are sad, demeaning aspects; but they are, in the last analysis, private to Dr. Leavis. What needs alertness is the measure in which Leavis's melodramatic image of his own life and role has bent or corroded his critical judgment. It is this which gives his assault on C. P. Snow what faint relevance it has.

The Richmond Lecture was an ignoble performance. In it, Leavis yielded entirely to a streak of shallow, arrogant cruelty. Over and over, he proclaimed to his audience that Snow was ignorant, that he knew nothing of literature or history and not much, one gathered, of science. Such attempt to prove by mere repetition is characteristically totalitarian; behind Leavis's fine-chiselled head loomed the shadow of a grotesque, intellectual McCarthyism. Though he is personally ignorant of America, Leavis threw out shop-worn clichés about the "emptiness" of American life, about the inhumanity of technological values. One realised, with a painful start, how much of Leavis's arsenal of insight dates back to the mythologies and tactics of the 1930s. Whereas Snow is immensely of the present, responsive in every way to what is new and jarring in our novel condition, Leavis has sought to bring time to a halt in a pastoral, Augustan dream of order.

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Leavis accused Snow of using clichés; his own performance was nothing else. Banality followed on banality in dull virulence. He did not even attempt to engage seriously what is crucial in Snow's argument—the sense of a re-alignment in international affairs, the re-definition of literacy to include the syntax of number. Snow is, indeed, trying to be a "new kind of man," if only in that he wishes to be equally and vitally at home in England, Russia, or the United States. Now it could be argued, in a close, discriminating way, that this "new ubiquity" of the imagination jeopardises those values of narrow, rooted inwardness for which Leavis stands. Though a rearguard action, such counter-statement to Snow would be stimulating. But none was forthcoming; instead of argument came stale insult. On the one hand was "Snow," on the other side were a set of approved clichés—"life," "humane values," "vital intelligence." What had been advertised as a responsible examination of the concept of "the two cultures" dissolved—as so much else in Leavis's recent work has done—into a ceremonial dance before the dark god, D. H. Lawrence.

Leavis's relation to Lawrence has become obsessive. It has passed from rational exposition into a weird self-identification. Lawrence is not only the "greatest English writer of the 20th century," but a master of life, a prophet by whose teaching alone our society may re-capture humane poise and creative fire. That there is much in Lawrence which is monotonous and hysterical, that very few of his works are unflawed by hectoring idiosyncrasies, that there was little in his genius either of laughter or tolerance—these are considerations Leavis can scarcely allow. In a dualistic image, as artificial and shallow as all Manicheism, Leavis opposes Lawrence to all that is inhuman, frivolous, insensitive, or modish in our culture. To query Lawrence, or to propose as Snow has done by his work and example that there are crises of spirit and political fact more actual or different than those dreamt of in *Women in Love*, is to query "life." Yet nothing could be less humane or more devoid of the tact of living encounter than was Leavis's harangue. Hearing it, one was brought up against the stubborn fact that a critic, however great, is barred from certain generosities of imagination to which an artist has title.

The Richmond Lecture and much else that is indefensible in Leavis's late pronouncements will soon be forgotten. But even at its prime, Leavis's criticism exhibits certain grave limitations and quirks. If the scope of his radical accomplishments is to be defined, these too must be noted.

There are the overestimates (particularly in Leavis's early criticism) of such minor talents as Ronald Bottrall or the novelist, L. H. Myers. There is the lack of any confrontation, large or sustained, with the poetry of Yeats, a body of work, one would have thought, no less in need of close valuation than that of Eliot or Pound. Like the Augustan critics, Leavis has been most at ease with the poetry in which the pulse of argument and systematic intelligence beats strong. Hence his decisive reading of *Mauberley* but his disinclination to allow for the occasions of pure lyric force, of articulate image, in the parched chaos of Pound's *Cantos*.

With respect to the novel, one's sense of omission is more acute. The case of Dickens is notorious:

> the genius was that of a great entertainer, and he had for the most part no profounder responsibility as a creative artist than this description suggests. . . . The adult mind doesn't as a rule find in Dickens a challenge to an unusual and sustained seriousness. I can think of only one of his books in which his distinctive creative genius is controlled throughout to a unifying and organising significance, and that is *Hard Times*. . . .

The limitation proposed here has always seemed to me restrictive of Leavis, not of Dickens. And the preference of *Hard Times* over such manifestly ampler achievements as *Bleak House* or *Great Expectations* is illuminating. In the main, Dickens is working outside the criteria of organising awareness and "significance" exhibited in *The Wings of the Dove* or *Nostromo*. But there is another vein of utter seriousness, of seriousness of committed feeling, of vehement imaginative enactment. It is this which Dickens possesses and that makes of him, after Shakespeare, the principal creator of remembered life in English literature.

Equally suggestive of a limitation in allowed criteria has been Leavis's neglect of Joyce. He has observed in *Ulysses* set pieces of sensuous realisation, but has nowhere done justice either to the architectural genius of the book, or to its enrichening and renovation of the language. Leavis has taken over D. H. Lawrence's scorn and misapprehension of Joyce's achievement. By Leavis's own requirements of seriousness and vitalising moral poise, much in *Dubliners* and *The Portrait of the Artist* should rank high in the tradition. But he has read in the obscuring light of a false distinction. The choice is not Lawrence *or* Joyce. Both are indispensable; and it is Joyce who has done more than any writer in our age to keep English mutinous and alive.

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Closely related to this imperception of Joyce is Leavis's failure to extend the reach of his criticism to two other novelists, both of them masters of poetic structure and vision. The one is Melville; a lineage of the English novel which can find a central place for James and an important preliminary role for Hawthorne, but which tells us nothing of *Moby Dick* or *Benito Cereno* (a tale to match the finest in Conrad), is necessarily incomplete. Only a full response to Dickens, Melville, and Joyce, moreover, makes possible a just approach to the novelist whom I take to be, after Hardy and Lawrence, the eminent master of modern English fiction—John Cowper Powys. If neither *The Glastonbury Romance* nor *Wolf Solent* (the only book in the language to rival Tolstoy) can find a place in the Great Tradition, it is precisely because their distinctive virtues—lyric, philosophical, stylistic, religious—lie outside the central but narrowing grasp of Leavis's sensibility.

ONE OTHER GREAT DOMAIN lies outside it. Leavis has refused to concern himself, on any but a perfunctory scale, with foreign literature. There is in this refusal a proud scruple. If criticism presumes complete response to a text, complete possession, how can a critic hope to deal maturely with anything but his own language? There is, unquestionably, a stringent honesty in this position. But it can be carried too far. How, for example, could most critics refer to landmarks as dominant, as unavoidable as the Bible, Homer, Dante, or Goethe, if they did not rely, in one or the other instance, on the crutch of translation? And is it not the duty of a critic to avail himself, in some imperfect measure at least, of another language—if only to experience the defining contours of his own?

Leavis's austere concentration may, indeed, have a deeper root. The vision of a nonconformist, morally literate England, of an England in the style of Bunyan, Cobbett, and D. H. Lawrence, informs his critical thought. "Englishness" is in Leavis's interior vocabulary a notion of tremendous positive force; it connotes a specific tone and natural excellence: "in *Rasselas* we have something deeply English that relates Johnson and Jane Austen to Crabbe." Much of the argument against Joyce is conducted in terms of the native as against the eccentric and uprooted. Joyce's experiments with language reflect a "cosmopolitan" sophistication. The veritable genius of English lies nearer home:

> This strength of English belongs to the very spirit of the language—the spirit that was formed when the English people who formed it were predominantly rural.... And how much richer the *life* was in the old, predominantly rural order than in the modern suburban world.... When one adds that speech in the old order was a popularly cultivated art, that people talked (so making Shakespeare possible) instead of reading or listening to the wireless, it becomes plain that the promise of regeneration by American slang, popular city-idiom, or the invention of *transition*-cosmopolitans is a flimsy consolation for our loss.

Written in 1933, this passage has a curious ring; it belongs to that complex of agrarian autonomism, of *la terre et ses morts*, which ranges from Péguy and Barrès to Allen Tate and the southern Fugitives in America. Behind it shimmers an historical vision (largely fanciful) of an older order, rural, customary, moralistic. It is the vision of men who fought the first World War—as Leavis did, a Milton in his pocket—only to observe what had been striven for at inhuman cost decline into the cheap chaos of the 1920s.

Leavis's "critical nationalism," which contrasts so sharply with the far-ranging humanism of an Edmund Wilson, is an instrument of great discrimination and power. But it has limiting consequences. The wide, subtle plurality of modern culture, the interplay of languages and national styles, may be regrettable—but it is a fact. To "place" Henry James without close reference to Flaubert and Turgenev; to exalt the treatment of politics in *Nostromo* and *Middlemarch* without an attendant awareness of *The Possessed*; to discern the realisation of social nuance in Jane Austen without allowing the presence in the critical context of Proust; all this is to proceed in an artifice of isolation. Is it possible to discuss comprehensively the nature of prose fiction without introducing, at signal stages of the argument, the realisation that Kafka has altered, lastingly, the relations between observed and imagined truth? Could Leavis advance as far as he does in support of Lawrence, of Lawrence's treatment of sexual feeling, if he permitted *Women in Love* to pass into the shadow of *Anna Karenina*?

This resolute provincialism has its counterpart in Leavis's treatment of time. There is scarcely anything written during the past twenty years that he has found worthy of serious examination. He has abdicated from one of the commanding functions of criticism, which is to apprehend and welcome the new. One has the impression that he cannot forgive Auden for the fact that English verse should have a history after Eliot even as he cannot forgive Snow for suggesting that the English novel should have a future beyond Lawrence. To use an epithet which he himself applies to Johnson, Leavis's criticism has, since 1945, rarely been "life-giving." Dealing with contemporary literature it has pleaded not from love but from scorn.

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These are, obviously, major reservations. They accumulate toward the image of a career divided midway by some essential darkening of mood and purpose. Much in the late Leavis exhibits a quality of inhumane unreality (the Richmond lecture being merely a flagrant instance). The depth of insight is increasingly marred by cruel contempt. There has been no criticism since Rymer's less magnanimous.

It is this which makes any "placing" of Leavis's work difficult and premature. Great critics are rarer than great poets or novelists (though their gift is more distant from the springs of life). In English, Johnson and Coleridge and Matthew Arnold are of the first order. In the excellence of both Dryden and Saintsbury there is an unsteadiness of focus, a touch of the amateur. Among moderns, T. S. Eliot and Edmund Wilson are of this proud company. What of Leavis? One's instinct calls for immediate assent. There is in the sum of his labours a power, a cogency that looms large above what has been polemic and harshly arrogant in the circumstance. If some doubt persists, it is simply because criticism must be, by Leavis's own definition, both central and humane. In his achievement the centrality is manifest; the humanity has often been tragically absent.

Once More, The Round

What's greater, Pebble or Pond?
What can be known? The unknown.
My true self runs toward a hill
More! O more! visible.

Now I adore my life
With the bird, the abiding leaf,
With the fish, the questing snail,
And the eye altering all;
And I dance with William Blake
For love, for Love's sake;

And everything comes to One,
As we dance on, dance on, dance on.

Theodore Roethke

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THEATRE

On the Passing of Matches

By Nigel Dennis

A CAREFUL READING of Max Frisch's *Biedermann and the Fire-Raisers*, which appeared with its tail docked last winter at the Royal Court, excites reflections on topics ranging from the burning of Troy and the Reichstag to Left-wing orthodoxy and the education of children. As the play is a sort of pastoral homily for wrongdoers and might be named Frisch's *Epistle to the Germans*, it excites also the mischievous delight that one is bound to feel when a Swiss takes a German aside and begs him not to worship a golden calf; but this pleasure is purely humorous and has no place in a discussion which should be conducted throughout with a mind purged of malice and a heart wide open to all that is beneficent in the international Bourse of intellectual exchange. This open attitude is essential to-day because almost all the national safety-curtains have been wound up into the flies and it is really exhilarating to see most of the theatrical world as a huge stretch of completely open country into which any playwright can walk and do his stuff without trailing the tail of his nationality behind him. Nations still exist, of course, but their dramatic tastes are admirably unpredictable: a cry from the heart in Cape Cod can wring a Swede's breast as easily as a Left Bank outburst can stun an Icelander. A Swiss prophet like Dürrenmatt may set out to capture Germans, only to find that he has hooked Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne, in whose hands his sermon becomes a fascinating cat's cradle of international woolwork. We all know what actors and directors can do in the way of contorting plays into strange, unexpected shapes. But nations have the same power of general translation: prompted, unlike our stars, by innocence and honesty, they spot what matters to them in a foreign work and give it, more often than not, an intriguing, enjoyable bias. The result is an entirely kaleidoscopic theatre—a sort of sieving and filtering theatre in which any given work may command attention in any form in any country. It is, on the whole, a most happy picture of internationalism and highly favourable to the arts.

To this internationalism there is added sometimes a rich profusion of historical influences, so that we have the feeling on seeing certain plays that the past is being drawn into the present much as if it were yet another friendly nation, rather than a piece of time. We find this in the Orphic tastes of Mr. Tennessee Williams and the deliberate classicism of Mr. T. S. Eliot and Thornton Wilder; but there is no doubt that Brecht must take first place as the assembler and digester of times and places. However coarse and corrupt the ideology may be, it is a great artistic feat to be able to get, say, Germany, Shakespeare, and China on one skewer, and to do so comfortably and happily without any of the nervous strain that is apt to mark a playwright when he imposes old forms on new things. By comparison, Brecht's friend Max Frisch is narrower; and yet the same spirit of combinations is comfortably at work, marrying colloquial German to Aeschylean parody and interrupting the ceremony with a loud cry from *Faust*. We have had many Greek-type choruses since the Greeks, and very stiff and hard to take they have been; but a Greek chorus composed of a dead-pan German fire-brigade makes us sorry that the Policeman's Chorus in *The Pirates of Penzance* was not part of a play dealing with an earnest problem of penal reform. So we see that our international theatre of time and place has yet another new dimension: it can mix the Aeschylean strain with the lightest operetta and, conjoining parody and solemnity, preach an entirely laughable sermon.

These are the artistic virtues of our international theatre and we can see easily enough how much sport and experiment they provide. It is only when we study the ideas in a play

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like Frisch's that we begin to have doubts about the quality of our international theatre and wonder if much that is regarded as international is not, in fact, a chummy lingua franca of ideological orthodoxy that goes down well everywhere because it is the accepted thing and asks no effort of thought either from the playwright or his public.

GOTTLIEB BIEDERMANN, the villain of Frisch's play, is a German millionaire. We know his type as soon as he lights his first cigar; for one symbol leads straight to another, and we have seen Biedermann pay for his cigars with cancer of the throat in Sartre's *Altona*. But we recognise him mainly because most of us grew up with him and have had his character explained to us by numberless novelists, playwrights, and sociologists. In this particular play, his name alone is enough to tell us that we are face to face with the sanctimonious man of property that we have come to know so well; and when the action begins to unfold we know, through long familiarity with the stock type, how he will behave and what he will do. Biedermann knows that his city is being terrorised by fire-raisers and has been heard to declare that they should all be ferreted out and strung-up to the nearest lamp-post; but when two such arsonists inveigle their way into his own house and start filling his own attic with drums of petrol, Biedermann cannot even reach for the telephone and call the police. We who have known Biedermann for many years know why he must remain helpless, why, even, he must become the arsonists' accomplice in the end. We know that as a rich capitalist he has no alternative to treachery. By flattering and cajoling the arsonists, he hopes to persuade them to burn other people's property but spare his. By conspiring with men who intend to ruin his country, he hopes to profit by the ruin. And finally, he knows that he has no moral right to call the police. As a capitalist, he has been as merciless to the weak as the arsonists are going to be to him. A man whom he has ruined has just put his head in the gas-oven: the widow is actually on-stage, weeds and all. So, when the arsonists ask Biedermann for the loan of a box of matches, Biedermann *must* oblige them. Private property, capitalism, and the guilt thereof, make it inevitable that the businessman shall supply the Nazi with the fire that will consume Europe.

The long epilogue which was not seen in the London production is a post-war parable. Germany has risen from the flames and is re-built gloriously in plate-glass and chromium. Those who fought for her have been forgiven by Heaven—which is Frisch's way of saying that the pastors and masters of modern Germany have decided to overlook the crime. Thanks to this amnesty, the Biedermanns of Germany are free to gang up with the fire-raisers all over again.

HOW WE MUST WISH that we could have written this remarkable play ourselves! To be able to call on so many skills, to tell such an entertaining parable so wittily, to have a theme with which audiences throughout the democratic world are so entirely familiar that it can be no more revolutionary than a revival of *Romeo and Juliet*. And, above all, to be able both to pin it on the Germans—who are in no position nowadays to shout, "Oh, dry up!"—and know that the other nations in our international theatre brotherhood will hastily come forward and *share the guilt*. Even in our Swiss fastness we would be able to guess that a producer like Mr. Lindsay Anderson would get our message without having to pause for thought—for what thought was present or required?—and that, by dressing our Biedermann up to look like Mr. Macmillan and turning our conflagration into an atomic explosion, would not only pass on our warning like a winking beacon but enable Englishmen, too, to savour the pleasures of a decent shame.

And yet, *had* we written it ourselves, we should have done it differently. We should have begun with a prologue, set seventy or eighty or ninety years ago, with Marx taking Engels into his confidence and saying that he could beat about the bush no longer: capitalism, frankly, contained the seeds of its own destruction. Engels, taken aback, but not too much, would ask some testing questions—planted by us, of course, to make sure there was no get-out—and soon come round to his friend's view. The rest of our play would show this original idea seeping and percolating through the world and being taken up by people like Lenin and Trotsky, and Rosa Luxembourg and Berthold Brecht. As it would always be exactly the same idea, always beginning at the same point and always ending with the same conclusion, it would soon cease to be original and become so orthodox that even the weakest brain could trot it out as easily as the Catechism. Its principal virtue, perhaps, would be that anyone who took to it would never need to think again—and here, we could insert a whole act about Russia, showing that a whole nation can be reduced to total silence for half a century, simply by virtue of being nailed to a single idea like a moleskin on a board. Our play would be the dullest play ever written and would go on interminably, through one generation after another, until it reached Mr. Lindsay Anderson. We would be no match for Herr Frisch as a

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dramatist, but as an orthodox, non-thinking automaton we could not fail to find his level.

THE BETTER WAY of dealing with Gottlieb Biedermann is to get rid of him altogether. We do not deny that he exists in real life, nor do we pretend that he is too upright to play with fire. Our reasons for not wanting to see him again are as follows:

1. Biedermann will soon be a hundred years old. He seemed brilliant in his youth and had much to teach us, but as he was predestined to follow one rut, he has had to follow it ever since, and this has done great damage to his dramatic stature. His opposite number, on the Jewish side, was Shylock, and as we have long since retired Shylock as an anachronism, it is absurd to pass on his gaberdine to Biedermann and replace the Jewish scapegoat with a Christian one. When we do so, we imagine that we are taking a big-hearted step forward; in fact, we are just marking time, while putting a new face and another religion on a stock dummy. This is not progressive.

2. Biedermann's money may be peculiar to him, but his vices are enjoyed by all of us. His habit of handing matches to Nazis is a very common one: we can remember Stalin doing it and would not put it past even the gentle Khrushchev. Lying, duplicity, and hypocrisy, employed to defend a personal position, reach their full flower in all sorts of people besides Biedermann: we have noted it in professors, historians, charwomen, radicals, theatre directors, and even authors. By embodying all our vices in Biedermann, we not only deprive ourselves of the very weaknesses that help to make us human beings but give others the impression that we are better than he is. Without Biedermann, we shall be much more ourselves, and when holding our mirror up to human nature will see a generally nasty face rather than a particularly ugly one.

3. Biedermann was once a godsend to intellectuals. He focused their minds on matters of great economic importance and helped them to postulate useful social reforms. But this has meant that by now the advanced brain cannot manage without him: the godsend has become a barnacle. It must surely occur to anyone with brains that to fix one's capacities upon a creature that can behave in only one way means that there will only be that way for one's thoughts. This singular, binding dedication is an excellent thing in missionaries, but leads to Chinaman's foot in *avant garde* rationalists.

4. Biedermann is no longer having an improving effect on the Germans. When he is presented to them on the stage, whether by a jolly Swiss or a tractarian Frenchman, they have no public retort to make for the simple reason that they have all been put in kindergarten and know that they are supposed to stay there. They provide a theatre for the whole world, but they alone can give nothing to it. We may be sure that when such a state of affairs exists, the public face of a people does not express their private thoughts. Too many sermons on Biedermannism and too many reminders of shame provoke in the end a sullen rebelliousness which smoulders at first in the privacy of the home and then bursts out into the street, with the wrong people waving the matches. It would be much better to encourage the Germans to use their brains again: some satire against ourselves, for which they must have boundless ammunition, would make an excellent start. For we know that they will not get very far if they stick to Biedermann. We know it because we have stuck to him ourselves and must now cry in panic, like the soldier in Schiller's *Die Räuber*, "I have captured a prisoner and he will not let me go!"

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TELEVISION

Between Commerce & the State

A Dissent — By COLIN WELCH

TELEVISION producers assume, according to Mr. Henry Fairlie,[1] that "it is the picture which primarily counts." Television, they think, is "something to be looked at"; it is consequently "the visual image" which alone matters. Despite the serious intentions of these producers, their programmes are accordingly doomed to "emerge as trivial, exciting only a superficial response in the viewers." Mr. Fairlie continues: "If this is bad enough in a primarily narrative programme, it can be disastrous in a programme about ideas. It is almost impossible to illustrate ideas. The result is that the ideas are reduced to a caricature of themselves, or that the viewer is distracted from them by gimmicky presentation."

With respect, I must suggest that Mr. Fairlie's polemic has something in common with the programmes it deplores. It presents in essence a picture rather than an argument, images rather than ideas. That it is an honest, vivid, and substantially accurate picture of I.T.V. as it is I wouldn't deny for a moment. As such, it is certainly an achievement in itself, and not to be decried. Yet it can find no complete justification or fulfilment for itself unless it provokes reflection or suggests some fruitful corrective action—a task which it has failed to perform even for its own author. His testimony is solid and impressive, his conclusion really laughable: only this, that television producers, directors and cameramen, instead of conspiring "to subdue the writer," should ally themselves with him in "the long battle" for ideas against the moguls who control the idiot box. Under the present dispensation, the most probable reward of any producers foolish enough to take Mr. Fairlie's advice is the abrupt termination of their careers. Mr. Fairlie can offer them no substantial or specific aid. He offers them, indeed, his own support and that of other writers—an upward push certainly, but of what avail against "the downward pull of the huge audience"? Twenty horsepower, shall we say, against 20 millions? He offers them also a "reliable armoury" of ideas, the hopeless impotence of which in themselves his whole article most effectively demonstrates.

What Mr. Fairlie, either by intention or through oversight, does not offer these rebellious producers is what alone could support them: alternative audiences conceivably sympathetic to or even hungry for the sort of ideas they wish to disseminate and alternative managements concerned to give these audiences what they want. He does not offer them the alternative sources of employment which he himself as a writer enjoys. Nor does he offer them alternative bases from which the long battle for ideas, lost at one point, could be continued and brought to eventual victory. His position is thus akin to that of the rebel-by-proxy who, from the sanctuary of the free world, exhorts Russia's satellites to uprisings which, when the time comes, he either cannot or will not assist, and which are in consequence doomed to defeat.

Is Mr. Fairlie's picture then fundamentally useless, art for art's sake? Alas, I doubt it. I think it will prove only too useful to all those who are concerned—often from the highest motives—to deny to the viewer a free choice between the wide variety of television services which are now or will soon be technically possible. These people I can only describe as the enemies of freedom. Would Mr. Fairlie be sorry to provide grist for their authoritarian mill? Or is he perhaps himself an enemy of freedom? From all I know of him, I doubt it strongly. His article is nonetheless equivocal. He certainly makes some perfunctory gestures in favour of competition: he does not like "the idea of a whole medium of communication being under the control of semi-State institutions like the B.B.C." and believes that people should "be allowed what they want." A person with these views would normally welcome certain forms of

[1] "The Idiot Box," ENCOUNTER, March 1962.

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commercial management as allies, as alternatives to the semi-State control he deplores. Not Mr. Fairlie, however, or not without reservations: he appears to regard "commercial" as a dirty word, and seems unable or unwilling to grasp the fact that commercial managements are quite conceivable which would actually be on his side and on the side of ideas.

If Mr. Fairlie is in fact an enemy of freedom, he is in distinguished company. As I write, the Pilkington report on the future of television and radio is still awaited. It may well be published by the time this appears. Naturally I don't know what it will recommend. The "evidence" submitted to it by various bodies, however, has been widely reported in the press. I have read all I can lay my hands on, and I can only say this: that if the committee dares to come out in favour of any sort of freedom, it will be in flat conflict with at least 90 per cent. of what appears to have been urged upon it.

The procession of witnesses must have been an imposing and profoundly depressing spectacle. It represented what is laughingly called a wide cross-section of our national life, ranging down from the haughtiest mandarins through all manner of organised busybodies and do-gooders to trade-union I'm-all-right-Jacks-in-office. It included the loftiest and basest interests, the most arrogant and the most timid, the toffee-nosed and the snotty-nosed, all united in an illiberal authoritarianism more characteristic surely of the Prussian tradition than of our own.

The actors' union, Equity, to its eternal credit, spoke up for the widest possible variety of programmes, including toll television to cater for minority tastes. Even more notable, because entirely disinterested, was the testimony of Associated Television which, through Mr. Norman Collins, declared that it would welcome more competition from any quarter to cut the present "colossal" profits—its own, of course, included. A Conservative party study group recommended that the proposed third channel should be farmed out to new programme companies under the Independent Television Authority. Whether this study group spoke even for its own party is at least doubtful. When asked for their opinions, the majority of rank-and-file Conservatives apparently expressed themselves opposed to any third channel whatsoever. Those prepared to tolerate a third channel at all thought it should go to the B.B.C. Nor are these elements friendless in high places. They can rely on the support, judging by past performance, of *The Times*, Lord Hailsham, most of the bishops and university vice-chancellors, a substantial number of Conservative M.P.s and several members of the Cabinet.

If the Conservatives are thus in two minds, the other two parties are unequivocally hostile. That the Labour party should be so is hardly surprising. The Liberal party's attitude is both surprising and saddening. It considers that the third channel should be non-profitmaking; only where the profit motive has been destroyed, in its opinion, will "duties" be taken seriously. The power of the advertisers should accordingly be broken, that of the State-sponsored I.T.A., particularly over news, enhanced. Deploring free competition, these Liberals point to its dire effects upon the Sunday press: so great is their illiberal zeal, that they entirely overlook the impressive increase in the circulation of serious Sunday newspapers. Lord Beveridge spoke up clearly for these so-called Liberals when he declared, in an almost treasonable reversal of traditional liberal teaching, that "television is too powerful a means of influencing the public to be left in the control of people who have any purpose other than public service." Really, for whom now *can* liberals vote?

Where the cause of freedom is deserted even by the Liberal party, it can hardly expect, nor did it receive, the support of the Communist party, the Church of Scotland, the Trades Union Congress, the British Medical Association, the National Union of Journalists, the Workers' Educational Associations, the Advertising Inquiry Council, the Musicians' Union, the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians, the Methodist Church, the Unitarians, the Co-operative Societies, the National Association of Women's Clubs, the National Institute of Adult Education, the Association of Broadcasting Staff, the National Union of Teachers and the Schools Broadcasting Council. All of these, together of course with the B.B.C. itself, have testified in favour of an extension of B.B.C. control to the third channel.

Through most of their testimony may be traced certain common strands of reasoning: that the taste of the general public is naturally, uniformly and irremediably corrupt and depraved; that commercial interests by pandering to it have already lowered standards; that wider competition could only result in a further debasement; that a strong public authority (*i.e.*, the State) can alone maintain "the highest tradition of British culture and entertainment." These general assumptions are obviously questionable and would doubtless have been vigorously questioned in any age before our own.

Behind them may be discerned the thrust of all sorts of special sectional interests, many quite

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legitimate, of course, and some even praiseworthy. All could be canvassed without doing any particular harm if the general tone of society, of parliament, press and people was firmly and vigorously liberal. But alas, it is nothing of the sort. The English of our day seem to have lost their instinct for freedom. They no longer regard freedom as being the creator and protector of all other goods and thus above all other goods; they regard it rather as one good among many others, to be measured and weighed against them, having no indisputable precedence of its own. Judging every issue "on its own merits," our compatriots are thus at the mercy of every pressure group; for, while the sectional merits of every case are vigorously represented by the groups who regard it as their business to do so, the general case for liberty is unrepresented and goes consequently by default. Thus everywhere to-day the general capitulates before the particular, freedom before unfreedom.

THE WAY IN WHICH Mr. Fairlie's picture may come in handy may be illustrated by a sentence from a recent article, "Whose Second Channel?" by Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne. Astonishing in itself, in the way in which false arguments are reared upon trivial premises, both entirely uncharacteristic of its author, this article is the more astonishing in that it was published in the *Sunday Telegraph*. For, with a certain wild consistency, it argues throughout that commercial control (*i.e.*, private as opposed to State control) of means of communication is incapable of making the public aware "of what is going on in the world, of the new forces at work and of how they affect Britain"; that commercial control cannot accomplish "the gigantic task of presenting reality, of forcing the truth home," because "it has no incentive to make the effort." Does Mr. Worsthorne consider that the *Sunday Telegraph* itself labours under this incapacity? If not, why not? Or does he believe, perhaps, that it is already controlled by the State? Or that it ought to be?

Admittedly Mr. Worsthorne seems to consider that no analogy between the press and television is permissible. He concedes that quality newspapers "flourish by catering for minority tastes." This admission one might think gravely damaging to his argument, but no: he sidesteps its consequences with agile levity. Television, he declares, "is essentially a mass medium or nothing." Why? He gives no reason for this assertion save this, that "the kind of talent which makes B.B.C. television so good now, particularly in programmes like *Panorama* and *Tonight*, just would not be content to cater for a minority audience"; to ask it to do so would be like asking an architect to produce "only model buildings." Again, why? Mr. Worsthorne writes exclusively for minority audiences (as do I). Is he profoundly discontented on this account? Does he regard it as fooling about with models? Does he really yearn for a mass audience? Does he not rather sometimes congratulate himself that his audience is more or less limited to the sort of people likely to tolerate or even understand what he wants to say? His own answers to these questions would, I am sure, be honest and humble. If so, why should he assume such overweening vanity in all his peers who happen to work for television? Why should they imperiously demand either mass audiences or no audiences? Might they not be content to be neither all nor nothing but merely something, as Bishop Blougram was and Mr. Worsthorne is?

The key sentence of Mr. Worsthorne's article is perhaps this: "On the experience of the past six years it is surely clear that the full potentialities of television cannot, and will not, properly be exploited by commercial interests." It is at this point that one can see precisely how useful Mr. Fairlie could be to Mr. Worsthorne and his illiberal allies. For Mr. Fairlie has succeeded in immortalising for us our whole experience of independent television over the past six years. Whether or not he accepts Mr. Worsthorne's arguments, he is thus doomed like a caryatid to underpin them.

"On the experience of the past six years," of course, it would be possible to argue that "the full potentialities of television" are not likely to be developed by a State corporation either. In 1960, for instance, the State brusquely refused permission to the B.B.C. to start a colour service which could have been with us by now. The introduction of colour does not seem to me a particularly important potentiality, I must admit, but the issue does dramatically illustrate the total incapacity of the B.B.C. to make headway against the wishes of its master, the State. Dependent upon the State for its privileges and incomes as for its very existence, it is naturally subservient to the State's every economic whim. When the State pauses, it pauses. Some argue, with powerful and relevant evidence, that it is also subservient to the State in the political sphere: obviously the danger is there, though the B.B.C.'s defenders invariably ignore or minimise it.

It is my contention, however, that the experience of the last six years is *entirely irrelevant* to the case for the widest possible competition on television and the widest possible choice for viewers. It neither supports it nor refutes it: it does not touch it at any point.

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THE EVILS AND ABUSES which have grown up in the past six years are admittedly very great. Supporters of State control can certainly argue that these abuses are not the direct result of a rigorous application of what they advocate. Yet it is equally clear that they cannot be the result of unrestricted competition, for competition—to the extent that it exists at all—exists only in an imperfect, feeble and possibly vicious form. It is certainly possible to argue, as I do, that all the major defects of I.T.V. are due not to too much competition, but to too little. For the fact that freer competition does not exist, the technical limitations of the medium must at the moment share some of the responsibility with the State. Yet these technical limitations are predominantly temporary: some could be overcome now, others in the near future. Thus, if competition continues to be less perfect than it need be and produces in consequence feeble or vicious results, the blame will be increasingly the State's.

The evils of the present dispensation could in fact have been foreseen from the extraordinary hybrid which was in fact dispensed. If Mr. Worsthorne will pardon an analogy with the press, let us suppose that until six years ago the Government had a total monopoly of the ownership and production of newspapers. It thus produced a sort of official *Times*, with regional variations, and with mildly high- or low-brow trimmings to cater for the supposed needs of various sorts of reader. Such an arrangement would widely be regarded as unhealthy, though no doubt it would commend itself to people like Lord James of Rusholme, Lord Beveridge, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter and Mr. Christopher Mayhew, M.P., possibly to Mr. Worsthorne and certainly to Sir William Haley, who would presumably have run the whole show—an analogy if you like in himself.

In deference to general disquiet and discontent, the Government finally decides to permit what it calls competition. It accordingly licences not several but one quasi-independent newspaper, thus conferring upon it a quasi-monopoly. What sort of newspaper would be the result? *The Daily Telegraph*? *The Guardian*? On Sundays, the *Sunday Times*, the *Observer*, or the *Sunday Telegraph*? Of course not: who would bother about the minorities for which these newspapers cater while the demands of the masses are unmet? It is a natural law that a single body, exposed to conflicting pulls, will answer to the strongest. The strongest pull to which this newspaper would be (and I.T.V. is) exposed is that of the mass audience, the mass market, and to this alone it would respond. The other conflicting pulls, towards higher standards or from minority interests, would be too weak to prevail. They would continue to be impotent and ignored until competing organs were permitted or created of a character likely to respond to them.

What then would our single, monolithic newspaper be but an amalgam of the whole popular press, with the *Daily Mirror* predominating? It would be a *Daily Mirror* purged by some such body as the I.T.A. of some of its worst excesses: it would be deprived by the same body of its principal virtue, its vigorous independence of the State as of other authority. For it is idle wholly to blame commercial considerations for the timidity, banality and vacuity of independent television, its hostility to all ideas, even to the most noisy and vulgar: some of this timidity is undoubtedly due to the fact that the moguls know very well that, from the vantage point of I.T.A., Big Brother is always watching them.

Thus we should have an emasculated *Daily Mirror* and this in essence is what we have in independent television to-day. We do not have to imagine the absurd arguments that would be based on this unmitigated misfortune: we know them all too well. We should have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Worsthorne informing us that the newspaper on which he now works could never exist save through the agency of the State; that the truth cannot be disseminated save by the State; that minorities can look only to the State for the satisfaction of their needs. And all this in an age which has seen newspapers suppressed in their hundreds, lies told without number, and minorities actually exterminated—all by one State or another!

If we pleaded for more competition rather than less, he would ponderously reply that this could lead only to further "vying in sensationalism." If we pointed to the existence of people of taste, education, and civilised interests—people moreover in general quite prosperous enough to interest quality advertisers—he would merely repeat that the press is a mass medium or nothing. Challenged again, he might well retreat into the technical difficulties of establishing greater competition, the problems of printing and distributing newspapers of widely different sorts, all of which difficulties he might maintain to be insuperable.

SO FAR AS the technical obstructions in the way of freer competition in television are concerned, those who know most about them seem most satisfied that they have been grossly exaggerated, presumably by the vested interests of the two existing services. They have been described to me as a great smokescreen. Some of these obstructions appear to be the result of mistaken Government policy, which could of

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course be changed. Of the rest known to me—I am no technician, certainly, but I have done some homework—I cannot find any major ones which could not be fairly rapidly shifted if the slightest incentive to shift them were supplied or even permitted. The enemies of freedom often pretend to be entangled like Laocoön in these technical difficulties. They would really like freedom and competition, they protest, but it just isn't possible and then they start mumbling on about bandwidths and the overcrowded air and so on. Strip away all this technical mumbo-jumbo and their authoritarian posture is at once clearly revealed.

As an example of mistaken Government policy one might cite the failure to charge an economic rent for the use of air space by television and other sorts of broadcasting.[2] Air space is a valuable commodity. It is in extremely short supply, especially on the very high frequency (V.H.F.) bands which suit television best. Of these bands the Government has annexed two-thirds, using part for official purposes and letting off the rest to commercial users, such as radio-cabs, at a purely nominal licence fee of only £2 each a year. The television services are allotted the remaining one-third of the V.H.F. space available. Here there is room for the two existing services and for the additional service now under discussion. This third service, however, is only possible on V.H.F. if the picture broadcast is of 405 lines, as it is at present. A 625-line picture, as widely advocated, would take up more room and thus incidentally rule out a V.H.F. third service altogether. The 625-line picture is not apparently much better than the existing 405; the other arguments for its adoption seem flimsy indeed. One must therefore suspect that agitation for the change springs not only from television set manufacturers anxious to hasten the obsolescence of their wares, but from existing television services anxious to drive competition off into the ultra high frequency (U.H.F.) bands, upon which pictures would be expensive to broadcast and could not be received on any existing set unmodified.

At present there is no incentive to use air space economically. Official and commercial users and the existing television services thus spread themselves wastefully on the V.H.F. bands: paying nothing for the privilege, why should they not? If the Government charged them an economic rent for the space they used, some of the official and commercial users would get off the air altogether, while the television services would at once stir their technicians to find out how to transmit a satisfactory picture on a narrower bandwidth, thus using less space. It is only a question of perfecting and applying ideas which, I understand, already exist: all that is lacking is the incentive to get moving. This supplied, the effect would be to free space for competitive television services. Supposing that two, three, or four extra independent services could thus be fitted in, one of these or even two might well sink to compete with I.T.V. for the mass audience. To this extent the mandarins might be vindicated. But what about the others? Would they not be interested in the sort of people who read the *Daily Mail* (which did not at one time spurn Mr. Fairlie's ideas), the *Daily Express* and the defunct *News Chronicle*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Guardian* or even *The Times*? There is such a thing as quality advertising; all these papers, to a greater or lesser extent, prosper by it. How can one dogmatically declare at this stage that television could never profit by their example? Why, even now in I.T.V. itself, there are eccentrics tempted to attract minority audiences and quality advertising! Freer competition, a wider variety of programmes and managements, might give these eccentrics their chance at last.

IN THIS WAY, intelligent people could hope to get the sort of programmes they like without having to rush to the State for them. They too have a pull, an upward one: given the range of choice through which it could express itself, it would almost certainly be effective. If not, it could still be reinforced. For instance, as Mr. Sawers suggests, I.T.V. might be compelled, out of its vast and still growing profits, to provide at cost or even below it studio and other broadcasting facilities for the independent third service now possible. These facilities could be rented even by comparatively impecunious groups and organisations—literary, dramatic, operatic, religious, local, professional or even amateur. These groups could then put out programmes and recoup themselves by charging for appropriate advertisements. As the range of what is technically possible widens further, these arrangements could be extended and varied with the constant aim of encouraging the greatest possible diversity of people supplying programmes, of programmes supplied, of audiences satisfied and advertising attracted. These arrangements should offer to Mr. Fairlie and his allies a wide choice of potential employers, not all resistant to ideas, and to Mr.

[2] For my facts and argument at this point I am largely indebted to Mr. David Sawers's paper, "The Cost of Choice," part of an excellent short survey, "T.V.: From Monopoly to Competition" published by the Institute of Economic Affairs, 66A Eaton Square, S.W.1.

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Worsthorne a wide choice of the sort of programmes which he seems to think only the State can supply.

Greater diversity of programmes would lead, I am sure, through improved programmes to an improvement in public taste. This improvement would be the more valuable in that it was produced not by official nagging nor by the denial of alternatives but by free choice consciously exercised. To the masses freedom inescapably offers what they want: this must be conceded. To minorities it offers not only what they want but what the masses will want to-morrow, what perhaps the masses would want to-day if they saw it. Offering the good in lavish measure together with the bad, it encourages discrimination, sharpens the critical sense and creates a cultural field in which Gresham's Law may be expected fruitfully to operate. A natural and spontaneous improvement of this kind, if more slow and uncertain, must also be infinitely more real, lasting and deep-rooted than one produced artificially from above by some sort of duress.

One point must be emphasised: independent television is often called "commercial" television, particularly by its detractors and at the moment with precise justice. I do not myself regard the word "commercial" as synonymous with evil, and I have never met anyone who cared much for liberty who did. It must nonetheless be made clear that, if independent television is allowed to grow and diversify as it could, the word "commercial" might well become less and less exactly applicable to ever-growing sectors of it. It is an egregious error to suppose that no-one except the Government will ever do anything except in the hope of making vast sums of money by it. Papers like the *Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The Times* are in a sense commercial concerns. Yet to make money is by no means their sole purpose nor necessarily the over-riding one. They bring to those who direct them rewards far beyond the financial. *Time & Tide*, I should think, has never earned a penny for any of its owners; yet in every other way it flourishes now as never before. So, incidentally, does Encounter itself. In other spheres, why did Mr. Christie launch Glyndebourne, Mr. Blond the Royal Court? Was money in either case the prize? There are in fact always people eager to start, or willing to back, every sort of exciting, experimental, charitable or in some other way praiseworthy enterprise, and quite content to profit modestly, to break even or to tolerate a reasonable loss. Even commercial concerns, moved by a desire for prestige or perhaps by more altruistic motives, have often sponsored worthwhile ideas. As independent television grows, there should be scope on it for all such people and concerns —to the great public benefit.

The classic case against the exclusive or predominant control of any means of communication by the State has been so often, so powerfully and so memorably expressed in the English language as surely to need no restatement now. Many people have been misled into supposing that, in the field of television, as in that of wireless, there is really no practical or tolerable alternative. Surely it is enough to suggest that this is quite untrue for some of these people to come to their senses? There are alternatives, many of them. The potentialities are almost limitless: we have only seen the beginning. Doubtless the free and spontaneous growth of independent television in all its forms would produce its own crop of abuses. Would it not be wiser to correct these as they occur rather than, dominated by vague fears and forebodings, to arrest the whole process before it has even begun?

On Giving Up a Good Thing

Although it's hard for great men to advise
The reckless young in their charge
To be careful, somehow they do it,

And when the young see this they are touched;
But persist in their unique errors
As birds dare Magdalen's thorny towers.

Michael Fried

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NOTES & TOPICS

Tocqueville on India

IT HAS LONG been known that Alexis de Tocqueville left among his papers the draft of a book on India. The first editor of his complete works, Gustave de Beaumont, attempted to reconstruct this essay of some fifty thousand words, but decided in the end not to publish it. My colleagues and I, responsible for the new and definitive edition of Tocqueville's works, have decided to make Tocqueville's notes available to the public. It is thanks to M. André Jardin, who deciphered and reconstructed a most difficult manuscript, that this essay can now be studied.

Tocqueville began to work on the problems of India almost immediately after the completion of the *Democracy in America*, as can be seen from a letter of September 1840 to his friend Jean-Jacques Ampère when he asked for advice on books relating to India. How often had Tocqueville drawn on Ampère's immense and ever-present learning—although he abandoned his fairly advanced Indian studies in summer 1843. Did he, like all great sociologists from Montesquieu to Karl Marx and Max Weber, sense the necessity of arriving at a socio-historical perspective which was not confined to Europe alone? It is probable. Only by comparison of our European with non-European concepts is it possible to understand ourselves adequately. It is fascinating to observe how in these pages Tocqueville breaks through a narrow European parochialism.

The following only suggests the breadth of Tocqueville's analysis.

He sees Indian society as immobilised in religious law. "There is a multitude of castes in India; there is no nation, or rather each caste forms a small nation of its own which has its own spirit, its own usages, its own laws, its own government. The national spirit of the Indians is contained within the caste." This is the reason why all conquerors of India have so easily been able to break down political power in India.

Probing more deeply into Indian religious beliefs, Tocqueville writes: "Brahmanism is at the same time the most absorptive and the most tolerant religion. This is easily explained when one notes that it is a religion of privileges.... One belongs to it by right of birth; it is impossible to enter it unless one is born within it. So it is impossible to feel hatred towards those whom Brahma has left outside." Only the Christian idea of the common origin of all mankind has introduced proselytism and persecution into the world. It is evident here how far Tocqueville has advanced from the deist and providential theological formulas of his *Democracy in America*, which he had just completed.

Tocqueville's next step to understanding India is directed towards Indian community attitudes. "All political life of the Indians has been drawn into the community. They did not oppose anything which might happen above it." Here all administration is concentrated. "As long as the community continued to exist it did not matter to whom the Empire belonged. They hardly perceived the change of the master...." In another passage Tocqueville returns to an analysis of Indian community structure. "Each village or rather small district forms a small distinct society which governs itself, has its chiefs, its clergy.... All this is hereditary. One is by right of birth member of one village and not of another one. Birth and not property gives rights and duties to the members of these small aristocratic republics. Most often property is individual; sometimes it is held in common; the chiefs of the village distribute land each year like the Arab tribes...."

India's community structure is marked by the absence of state centralisation which, Tocqueville maintains, characterises the Chinese Empire. One sees how the guiding concepts of Tocqueville's political sociology—centralisation and decentralisation—which link his published works together, appear in these notes as the raw materials for a universal perspective. In a later passage Tocqueville underlines again that the source of Indian civic obedience is to be found within the Indian religion.

Will the Indians ever adopt our civilisation and our religion? asks Tocqueville. "Nothing points to this. Christianity is declining in India. Yet there are signs of a society in dissolution. Mixture of caste, their members outside their respective attributions, unbelief in the midst of superstition. But all this is weak and is bound to be a very long process...." And even today this process is going on in India.

When comparing the Asiatic with the British conquerors of India Tocqueville finds that the latter are the more moderate and intelligent; but whereas the former did not feel superior to the conquered, the British did, and they left the Indians outside all important governmental actions and never mixed with them socially and culturally.

AMIDST BARELY CONNECTED NOTES on Indian religion and society appears a curious reflection

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reminiscent, no doubt, of Montesquieu's *Grandeur et Décadence des Romains*:

> Two ways for people to fall into decadence or into barbarism: the breaking up of the social edifice by invasions and contraction which may be more to be feared (the Greeks, the Indians). One day this will happen to us. One asks oneself from where will the force come which will destroy modern civilisation? It is erroneous to believe that it need be an external force. The Romans were no longer more than half-civilised when the barbarians conquered them. See their coins, monuments, art....

This note is, I think, fundamental for an understanding of Tocqueville's sociology of culture.

Yet however deep-seated Tocqueville's cultural pessimism was, he is far from applying European ethical norms to the Eastern world. A few lines aptly illustrate this point. He writes:

> Famine kills one third of the population of Bengal, three to four million men. They die like heroes amidst the herds which their religion forbids them to touch; the same men who flee by the thousand before one European! What one calls their weakness is therefore not fear of death, but rather absence of reason for braving it.

Here Tocqueville dissects with unfailing sharpness and without prejudice the religious foundation of a moral code.

Tocqueville finds confirmation of his own interpretation of Hindu heroism in Abbé Dubois' volumes (Paris, 1825) on *Moeurs, Institutions et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde*: "Picture of the fortitude with which the Hindus allow themselves to be suppressed politically by the first one who comes, whereas they defend the most trifling privileges of caste.... Thus the caste privileges have survived all the ideas and habits of civilisation. What inconceivable power in this system!" We saw it at work quite recently, when millions of Hindus prayed for protection from the evil constellation of the stars. Tocqueville finds an excessive mobility of fortunes in India. There is no family structure. Perpetuity is within the caste.

In a short paragraph Tocqueville takes up again the characterisation of Hindu religion.

> How can one destroy a religion which is so well woven into the whole of life, so that each sin is to be regarded as a dishonourable action? Each violation of religious law makes him lose his position in the world.... How to make someone renounce religious ideas if it necessitates changing all religious ideas, and religious habits by renouncing all habits? Never has a religion been more absorptive. But in order to retain this power over all the actions and ideas of man, religion had to make great concessions to some of the passions and vices of the human heart. In particular religion seems to have allowed full liberty to the senses. So disorders of morals are not forbidden, but sometimes even commanded by religion.

Obviously here Tocqueville has Eastern erotic techniques in mind to which he alludes in another passage of his notes.

Idolatry, writes Abbé Dubois, has never shown greater excesses than with the Hindus, a consequence of the principle which demands veneration for everything useful. Tocqueville does not accept this utilitarian interpretation of Hindu beliefs. "Whereas I hold, this follows from the doctrine that everything has a soul and that the souls of human beings can be in everything. There is no difference, the Hindus think, between souls; from which they conclude that morally it is as sinful to crush an ant as to commit a murder." Metempsychosis is the fount of all Hindu beliefs; thus it has a very great influence on their moral behaviour. Yet the doctrine of metempsychosis is rejected by the Saivite sect. Here follow more references in Tocqueville's manuscript to Abbé Dubois' second volume: notes on punishment; heaven and hell; religious penal code; and more excerpts on caste.

Once more Tocqueville stresses the power of Hindu religion: "The civil and the religious laws of the Hindus are so closely linked together that it is impossible to violate the one without trespassing on the other.... It is the only powerful religion which has no head and which does not lean on a sacerdotal hierarchy. But this religion is based on a sacerdotal caste which is perhaps firmer and more permanent; the spirit of caste is the most powerful of all *esprits de corps*...."

Tocqueville accepts Dubois' traditional fourfold distinction of the Indian caste structure: the *Brahmans* with their sacerdotal function; the *Kshatrias* who provide the warriors; the *Vaishyas* who cultivate the soil and include the merchants; and the *Sudras*, the labourers who "are subjected to a kind of servitude." The latter, Tocqueville notes, are the most numerous. They almost make up the mass of the Indian population; they are joined by the mass of the *Pariahs*: together they are equivalent to nine-tenths of the Indian population. Tocqueville is aware of the poverty of India: "Of all civilised countries India is the poorest and the most miserable."

Have the British improved the economic position of India? "It seems to me there is no doubt that the condition of the people has not improved, at least in several respects." And he gives two reasons for the misery within the lower castes. First: the increase in population as the result of prevailing peace and of the

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abhorrence of sterility. Secondly: the destruction of Indian manufactures by the industrial progress in Europe. "The industrial misery assumes gigantic proportions in India because of the caste structure. The caste of the weavers, for example, cannot take on another profession without losing its honour."

In this context another sentence of Tocqueville's should be quoted which is eminently characteristic of his sociological method: "Owing to the metempsychosis the aristocracy in India is open. One is born and lives a *sudra*; but if one conducts oneself well one is born again a *brahmin*...." The principle of an open aristocracy has provided Tocqueville with a key for an understanding of the British social edifice (*Cf.* Tocqueville's *Journeys to England and Ireland*, London, 1958); he applies his findings here to an analysis of Indian society.

The last section of Tocqueville's notes on India are based on ideas which he derived from Abbé Dubois's work. Of course, he has used other sources as well, in particular James Mill's *History of India* on which many of his jottings are based, and Barchou de Penhoën's work: *Histoire de la Conquête et de la Fondation de L'Empire Anglais dans L'Inde* (Paris, 1840–41). It is evident that Tocqueville did not complete his notes on Barchou's volumes which he had intended to review in *La Revue des Deux Mondes*; he did not think too highly of this work. Tocqueville was never enslaved by the work of others; they only provided material for his own analysis and interpretation.

Tocqueville's studies on India arose, too, apart from his general sociological curiosity, from his preoccupation with Algerian problems and affairs which indeed take up four fifths of the volume in which the essay on India appears. On several occasions, while writing on India, he glances nostalgically towards French Africa:

> What strikes me forcibly is the extent to which the British government of India which has done so much by war, is in its essence a *civil* government. It represents a company of merchants, a thing even more anti-military than a civilian administration. This government has in its pay an army which looks rather askance at it and which must ceaselessly be put in its place, which is secondary (see in particular Clive's embarrassment with the army in 1766 and the useless effort of the latter to gain preponderance); and yet this government, so unmilitary, makes itself master of India. Think of Algeria!

Tocqueville's analysis of the British administration of India, which he does not attempt to whitewash, stresses everywhere the struggle for a clear separation of civil and military power; and above all for the maintenance of an independent judiciary. Tocqueville was a great pupil of Montesquieu.

In this respect he saw the achievement of the British colonial effort which, no doubt, implied a lesson for his own country. But Tocqueville founded no school and has remained a lone figure, as he had always been.

J. P. Mayer

Spain 1936, and After

By Anthony Hartley

AT ABOUT THREE O'CLOCK in the morning of Monday, July 13th, 1936, a right-wing Spanish politician, José Calvo Sotelo, was awakened from his bed by a group of men claiming to belong to the Madrid police and of whom one, a certain Captain Condés, actually was in the Civil Guard. Not without misgivings he agreed to accompany them to police headquarters. When they had gone a little way in the car one of the men fired two shots into the back of his neck. The murderer was a gunman who had once been the bodyguard of a Cuban general, and the murder was an act of revenge for the assassination of a lieutenant of the Republican *Guardia de Asalto*. It was simultaneously the last killing of peace and the first execution of the Spanish Civil War. Many similar incidents had preceded it, and more were to follow.

Looked at from the depths of 1961 the Spanish Civil War, which has now found an able historian in Hugh Thomas,[1] seems an ancient and haphazard affair unexpectedly lacking in relevance to our contemporary dilemmas. Was this the cause that stirred a thousand consciences? The debate that divided Western Europe? An effort of the historical imagination is required to make these dead bones live, and the notices that Mr. Thomas's book has received show the reviewers struggling with the task of explaining away a certain sense of anti-climax—a feeling

[1] *The Spanish Civil War*. By Hugh Thomas. Eyre & Spottiswoode, 35s.

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which, I hasten to add, is not in the least due to Mr. Thomas, but rather to the fact that this dramatic moment of European history has been lived and re-lived, but can never take on in retrospect quite the same glowing colours as those with which the contemporary imagination endowed it.

More and more it comes to be recognised that, in its essence, the war was, as R. H. S. Crossman has put it, "a fiercely introspective Spanish tragedy." In that case the involvement of Europe's intellectuals was fortuitous—due to an historical coincidence, which may have produced a wave of generous feeling in many countries, but was not necessarily to the advantage of the Spanish people. Now we re-live, not so much their war as our own ideological or emotional adventures. Malcolm Muggeridge is there knocking the egg-heads, Claud Cockburn back in "a foxhole among the rocks of the Sierra Guadarrama," Cyril Connolly laments "the dream of an international intelligentsia." But the drama of Spain and its inhabitants is exemplary enough to do without nostalgia or rancour, and its stark outline looms the more strongly for being divested of the moral draperies in which it was swaddled at the time. Who cares to what side the dead men of Goya belonged? All we remember is the bony hand clutching the scroll and the epitaph: *Nada*.

THE BEGINNING of the war can be conveniently dated from that moment in the early morning when Calvo Sotelo died, but its causes go back a long way—as far as the Spanish decline at the end of the golden century. Long before the proclamation of the Republic in April 1931 the signs had been there to read, and there had been no lack of acute augurers to scrutinise them. The terrible poverty of rural Spain; the recalcitrance of the Spanish masses when faced with modern industrial civilisation;[2] the decadence of the upper classes; the centrifugal tendencies inherent in Catalan and Basque nationalism; the obscurantism of the Catholic Church and the fanaticism with which it was hated by the adepts of the new religion of libertarian anarchism—all this explosive material had been analysed many times. The first thirty years of the 20th century had seen the Spanish malady diagnosed time and again by as clear-sighted a group of intellectuals as was possessed by any country in Europe. It was the glory and the tragedy of the generation of '98 that they stood a little distance away from their country and their countrymen. When the storm broke they could only remain apart and wring their hands.

In its long-term causes the Spanish Civil War was a convulsion afflicting a political organism whose joints were too arthritic to be able to cope with revolutionary pressure from below. Ortega y Gasset once wrote that countries exist by having a future, but none of the futures obscurely desired by the Spanish people—whether anarchist, Socialist, Carlist, or those offered by Catalan and Basque nationalism—could translate itself into action through the existing machinery of the state, and few of them were adapted to the realities of the modern world and, therefore, to the solution of those economic problems (particularly the agrarian crisis) which were creating a revolutionary situation out of hunger and despair. By a bitter paradox the Castilian spirit of centralism which might have created an effective state was violently opposed by those very provinces (Catalonia and the Basque country) which were most advanced economically. From the Catalan point of view Castile was tyrannical and obscurantist, but the Castilian grip would be needed if any solution were to be found to the wider question of Spain's future as a nation. Such a solution could only have been imposed, and for this a strong state was essential. The alternative would have been a readiness to compromise, for which Spanish national (as distinct from local) politics did not offer many precedents.

During the 'thirties, moderation hardly had a chance. The government which came to power after the election of the Constituent Cortes—its dominant figure was Manuel Azaña—instantly embroiled itself in a sterile struggle with the Church over the new constitution. It had to face a right-wing *coup d'état* headed by General Sanjurjo as well as strikes and an armed rising in Barcelona on the part of the anarchists, who controlled the largest federation of trade unions in Spain, the anarcho-syndicalist CNT. Thus from the very start the Republican centre was

[2] "... the majority of the lower people in Spain care little whether Europeans find their views backward.... Spain severed itself from the progress of Western civilisation towards the end of the 17th century, and the Spanish people simply, deeply, and instinctively dislike what has been done since. This dislike makes itself felt in the distaste for work in modern enterprises, in the distaste for work in the modern way of intensive application at all, in the inability to handle modern machinery, whether technical or administrative or military or of any other kind; it makes itself felt in the stiff resistance of the administration, of the landed aristocracy and gentry, and even of most factory-owners, as well as of the workers, against innovation; it is to be felt in aristocratic conservatism, in Carlism, in anarchism, in fact in most of the political movements of Spain...." Franz Borkenau, *The Spanish Cockpit* (1937).

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under attack from forces which lay outside the parliamentary game and were unwilling to accept the validity of its results. It might have been possible to stabilise the situation, if the more moderate political parties had been willing to put the survival of the Republic before their own programmes and interests. But, after the elections to the Second Cortes had put José Maria Gil Robles and his right-wing coalition, the CEDA, in a commanding position, the Socialists succumbed to provocation, discarded their traditional policy of legality, and under the influence of Francisco Largo Caballero, "the Spanish Lenin," staged a rising which had no chance of success, but led to heavy fighting and a horrible repression in the mining region of the Asturias. No doubt they had reasons for this attempted rebellion—they had to prove themselves at least as militant as the anarchists in defence of working-class interests—but the only result was to frighten the middle classes and to consecrate a tradition of refusal to accept electoral results when they were unfavourable which was already only too deeply rooted in Spanish history. So that, when the Popular Front came to power in February 1936, the defeated forces of the right—the Church, the Army, the Carlists, the Falange, and all those who feared Red Revolution—were only following an established precedent in plotting to reverse the decision of the polls by force.

AS USUAL IN SUCH CASES the only available force was that of the army—an army which had behind it a long series of *pronunciamientos*. This was to be a more complex affair than a declaration by a general and his troops, and Mr. Thomas's account does not make it entirely clear who first took the initiative—a point which it is probably impossible to decide without the publication of the papers of the principal conspirators (including those of the present head of the Spanish government). For some time the leading plotter seems to have been General Emilio Mola, who from his fief of Pamplona prepared the rebellion in the north and negotiated with the Carlist leaders. By the time of the murder of Calvo Sotelo and after three or four months during which public order was gradually submerged in a wave of assassination, sabotage, and church-burning, preparations were far advanced. The main features of the plot were the seizure of Spanish Morocco (thus securing the services of the Army of Africa, the Moors and the Foreign Legion), agreement with the Carlists and risings by garrisons all over Spain. The Falange seems to have remained outside the conspiracy until quite late in the day. On July 17th this scheme was put into execution. From then on the Civil War was to be decided by the armies, but the lines of battle would depend on the successes won by the Nationalists during the first few days of fighting, when the garrison commanders were making up their minds whom to support or endeavouring to take over power in the area under their command.

At this decisive moment Republican losses would probably have been fewer had the government felt itself able to give arms to the trade unions earlier than it did. As it was two days went by before a new administration headed by José Giral felt able to take this vital step, and those two days had enabled the rebels to seize Morocco and, by capturing Cadiz, Seville, and Cordoba, to establish a bridgehead for the Army of Africa. On the other hand, a little more decision and initiative from the generals would have won them many more positions. Ortega y Gasset had written of them years before that they seemed to imagine that it was only necessary "to raise a shout" for everyone to follow them, and, at the outbreak of the Civil War, they frequently acted as if they hardly expected serious resistance. In this they were quite wrong as the fate of Fanjul in Madrid and Goded in Barcelona was to show. The Spanish working classes, whether anarchist or socialist, were quite a match for half-hearted garrison troops when it came to street-fighting. When the dust had cleared away the Nationalists were in occupation of most of the north of Spain with the exception of the Basque provinces (which were determined to defend their autonomy and the Republic that had given it to them), but only of Seville, Cordoba, and Cadiz in the south. This, however, was enough. The militiamen who had fought so bravely in Madrid and Barcelona were less effective in the open field, and the impossibility of executing even the simplest tactical manœuvre with their self-willed and shambling columns made them easy victims for the Army of Africa. Within two months the operations conducted by General Varela and Colonel Yagüe had brought their troops to the gates of Madrid and effected a junction with Mola's northern forces, diverging from their direct line of advance to raise the famous siege of the Alcazar. From then on it was evident that, even if the Nationalists did not win at once, the Republicans would have a long and gruelling struggle to re-take the ground they had lost.

At best the war would be one of attrition, and the winner would be the side which could avoid exhaustion.

MEANWHILE, on both sides of the front bloody reprisals were taking place. The appalling savagery of these would seem to

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justify those who find some special unrelenting quality in the Spanish character. From the "bodies of small boys in pyjamas" which an eye-witness reported seeing in the Madrid mortuaries to the priest in Majorca remarking that "only ten per cent of these dear children refused the last sacraments before being dispatched by our good officers," from the massacre in the bull-ring at Badajoz to the massacre in the Model Prison at Madrid, the tale is long and sickening to read. Mr. Thomas estimates that about 40,000 people were executed by the Nationalists during the Civil War and slightly more than double that number on the Government side. Most of the latter's executions took place during July and August, 1936, and were the result of spontaneous popular fury, though this hardly improves matters. The anarchists, in particular, killed as a kind of religious duty, attacking priests, nuns, and churches with the zeal of heretics rather than the mere rational enthusiasm of anti-clericals. Their mood was that of the old man who talked to Gerald Brenan on a hillside overlooking the burning houses of Malaga:

> "What do you think of that?" he asked.
> I said: "They are burning down Malaga."
> "Yes," he said, "they are burning it down. And I tell you—not one stone will be left on another stone—no, not a plant nor even a cabbage will grow there, so that there may be no more wickedness in the world."[3]

To the credit of the government attempts were made to stop the killing, and after September illegal executions became rare. But by then most of the potential victims were dead in any case, and those members of the middle classes who had an eye to their personal safety had taken refuge inside the Communist Party, which emerged as the champion of order and discipline, partly through opportunism and partly through a genuine realisation that the war could not be won without the help of professional men, the richer peasants, and even small industrialists. Perhaps in some ways the coldly continuous executions on the Nationalist side were more unpleasant than spontaneous popular atrocities—certainly the blessing of the Church added a nasty taste of hypocrisy to them. As Salvador de Madariaga has pointed out, Luis Companys, the President of Catalonia, saved many priests, but no clerical voice was raised when he was executed by General Franco after being handed over by the Vichy Government. However, the incidence of Nationalist executions does not absolve the Republicans nor does it excuse those numerous English liberals and socialists who either failed to realise that executions were going on or to protest against them if they did. Mr. Thomas's figures of executions have not, as far as I know, been disputed, but there has been a singular absence of remorseful comment on the part of those who deceived themselves and others twenty-five years ago.[4]

UP TO THIS POINT the Spanish Civil War had been largely a Spanish affair with even the atrocities committed on the Government side having their ancestors in those periodical explosions of popular rage which had led in the past to the expulsion of the Moriscos and to the revolt against Napoleon. Now, however, on the arrival of Nationalist troops before Madrid, the struggle was to enter the phase of foreign intervention.

"The war," wrote Orwell,

> "was fought at a low technical level and its major strategy was very simple. That side which had arms would win. The Nazis and the Italians gave arms to their Spanish Fascist friends, and the Western democracies didn't give arms to those who should have been their friends. So the Spanish Republic perished...."

This version of events is roughly true, whatever help the Republic may have received from Russia and France. The fortunes of the Spanish Civil War were to be decided by the actions

[3] Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth* (1943). The religious, millenarian character of the anarchist movement in Spain is well illustrated by Mr. Brenan's story of the old anarchist who "maintained that, when the age of liberty came in, men would live on unfired foods grown by their own hand." Like other pious sectarians in history their zeal was directed towards the suppression of "the wicked" as much as towards the hastening of the golden age.

[4] The fact is that relatively few British politicians or publicists are well qualified to judge a régime totally different from that to which they are accustomed and about which they have strong preconceived ideas. That remains as true to-day as it was at the time of the Spanish Civil War (as is shown by a book like George Gale's *No Flies in China* in which a Labour Party delegation is to be seen coping none too successfully with the daunting enigmas of Communist China). Fortunately, there are some symptoms of tyranny which are more frequently recognised than they once were. It is becoming harder for régimes to get away with (literally) murder simply by calling themselves some high-sounding name—"democratic" or "popular" or "Christian." That is all to the good, but it is still the case that conceptions about foreign countries are better gathered from people who actually live there and speak the language than from the public relations officers of the responsible government. Otherwise one ends up with nonsense about "the smiling faces of the people of the autonomous region of Tibet...."

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of those modern European states which the majority of Spaniards found hateful, and, in the course of the struggle, Spain itself was to suffer a forcible modernisation, to which it had always refused to submit in time of peace.

From the beginning of the rebellion it had become apparent that the Nationalists were likely to receive German and Italian aid, although the German Foreign Office was at first as opposed to the idea of helping them as the British Foreign Office was to the idea of their being helped by Germany. The Italians were first in the field with eleven *Savoias* flown to Morocco from July 25th onwards—from the very day, in fact, on which the French *Front Populaire* government under pressure from London and the Chamber of Deputies decided to refuse aid to the Spanish Government. On the next day Hitler saw emissaries of the military *junta* and, without the knowledge of the Wilhelmstrasse, promised help. There followed the dispatch of the by now familiar caravan of "tourists," "volunteers," and technicians. To fight in Spain fitted in with German and Italian ideological prejudices, might help to outflank Léon Blum's France, and was more certainly useful for the testing of military tactics and weapons. Meanwhile, on the Republican side, desperate efforts were being made to acquire war material, for, though France had refused direct aid, it had not yet closed its frontiers to shipments for Spain. Already the Comintern was helping with medical supplies and money, and foreign volunteers were beginning to arrive in Barcelona and Madrid.

IT WAS AT THIS POINT, on August 9th, that the French Government announced that, since it had received so many favourable replies to its proposals for non-intervention in the Spanish Civil War, it was now closing the Pyrenean frontier to war material. What followed has become a classical instance of diplomatic make-believe. Non-intervention agreements were signed, the principle of non-intervention was accepted by all the great powers (and even by the British Labour Party), but in practice was only applied by the Western democracies. The non-intervention committee carried on interminable discussions in London, while Germany and Italy were busily shipping arms and even small expeditionary forces to Spain. Russia followed later with arms and advisers, but the ex-head of Soviet military intelligence had been in Spain from August 27th, and the Comintern had been instructed to speed the flow of arms and volunteers—moves which suggest that Stalin's sincerity in signing the non-intervention agreement was strictly proportionate to his desire to propitiate Britain and France in view of the danger to the U.S.S.R. from Hitler. Not that Russian breaches of the agreement were unjustifiable. The sole result of non-intervention was to ensure the closing of the French frontier and to prevent the Republic from buying arms in France, Britain, and America, while German and Italian help for the Nationalists was hardly interrupted. In the circumstances the Republic had to rely on the Soviet Union and the arms smuggling organised by the Comintern. Thus Britain and France not only disadvantaged a legally established government in its resistance

Djilas

Belgrade

A BRIEF *official announcement has appeared in the Belgrade newspapers according to which the distribution in Yugoslavia of the Italian journal* Tempo Presente (*edited by Ignazio Silone*) *has been prohibited because of "a slander against the National War of Liberation." The ban is in connection with a short story by Milovan Djilas* ["*War,*" ENCOUNTER, *April*] *in which the former Yugoslavian Vice-President and Communist heretic writes about the absurdity of war. Djilas finished the manuscript while he was still in prison and it was mailed abroad without difficulty. The story contains no specific reference to names or places. The official action appears to be an attempt at intimidation, and is casting a shadow over Tito's generous action in freeing Djilas and allowing him to continue his literary non-political activities.*

NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG

Belgrade

WHEN *Mr. Djilas was released from prison a year ago he was told that no obstacles would be placed on the publication of his work abroad providing they did not deal with political subjects. . . . The official explanation that the story is slanderous appears therefore to be only a pretext, and the real reason, one assumes, may have been that it appeared under Mr. Djilas's name. The announcement, for example, referred only to the story entitled "The War" without mentioning the name of its author—another fact suggesting official determination not to accord Mr. Djilas's name any publicity.*

Since his release a year ago Mr. Djilas had resumed normal activity and had continued writing. Though after his release it appeared that the Government was ready to permit him to publish his works in Yugoslavia, his position had remained almost unchanged, and none of his manuscripts dealing with non-political subjects has so far been published.

THE TIMES

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to a military rebellion, but also pushed it into the (from their point of view) undesirable embrace of the Communist International.

Looking back on non-intervention, it appears as one of those diplomatic fictions which foreign offices adore. Significantly enough, the German Foreign Office was favourable to it, as was Alexis Léger at the Quai d'Orsay. It was an example of what might be called diplomat's diplomacy, a creation of pure appearance, which might have worked had Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin been professional diplomats themselves. Unfortunately they were not, and the tinsel policy collapsed.

From now on military operations in Spain were dependent on the amounts of foreign aid received by the combatants. Just as the sending of transport aircraft from Italy had enabled the Nationalists to ferry the Army of Africa across the Straits of Gibraltar at a moment when sea transport had been interrupted by loyalist warships, so the arrival of the international brigades on the Madrid front in November 1936 saved Madrid and made the prolongation of Republican resistance possible. Thereafter successive doses of aid galvanised both the Spanish Government and their opponents. In 1938 the French even re-opened their frontier on the Pyrenees to arms traffic. But it was already too late. Despite spectacular Republican victories such as the Italian rout at Guadalajara or the battle of Teruel, the Nationalists steadily improved their position, conquering the Basque country in the summer of 1937 and breaking through the Aragon front to the sea in the spring of 1938. There was always a little more material sent from Germany and Italy to counteract the effect of that Russian aid for which the Republic had had to pay with its gold reserve. Gradually the government forces were pushed back, and, though the futile battle of the Ebro and the apparent imminence of European war in the autumn of 1938 seemed to give the Republic a respite, this was delusory.

On January 26th, 1939, General Franco's troops entered Barcelona, and by the beginning of April the war was over, its end hastened by Colonel Casado's *coup d'état* against the Negrin government and its Communist allies.

THE MILITARY HISTORY of the Spanish Civil War therefore returned a decisive verdict on the causes for which the battle had been engaged. The separatism of Catalonia and the Basque country had been crushed by the paladins of the Spanish army, unworthy representatives of the centralising spirit of Castile, and, under foreign impulsion, both sides had had to undergo a measure of modernisation which, had it taken place earlier, might have rendered the war unnecessary. And behind the lines the story was the same: a victory for "efficiency" and the elimination of parties whose "autonomy" might have threatened the unitary character of the state.

On the Nationalist side the story is one of the increasing ascendency of General Franco, aided by the premature death of Mola, and definitely achieved when, in April 1937, he united the Carlists and the Falange in a new party under his own leadership. This step marked the end of political activity behind the Nationalist lines and the suppression of the "popular" wing of the Falange, whose leader Hedilla was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment for "rebellion." After that it could be said that Franco was the Salamanca government and that the traditional forces of the Spanish right had been incarnated in a new, stream-lined form, which eliminated the dangers of regionalism implicit in the Carlist alliance.

In Barcelona and Valencia the Communist rise to power had something of the same effect. Largo Caballero, who had succeeded Giral as Prime Minister at the beginning of September 1936, had recently been an ally of the Communists, to whom he had imprudently made over a considerable part of his political strength by uniting the Socialist and Communist youth movements just before the outbreak of war. In his government there were two Communists and a number of Communist sympathisers such as Alvarez del Vayo and Juan Negrin. The Communist Party of Spain had been fairly small before the war, but it was to grow enormously in a very short space of time. Communist discipline, Communist control of Russian aid, Communist willingness to protect their own against anarchist excesses—all these were reasons for the spread of their influence. It was not long before they were demanding their pound of flesh and using the positions of power, which hard work and steady intrigue had secured for them, to make sure of getting it. Since they held that the conduct of the war must come before such revolutionary projects as collectivisation and the abolition of money, they were bound to clash with the anarchists, and, with military operations settling down in a more regular pattern, the cards were stacked in their favour.

Soon there was fighting in Barcelona between the anarchists and the Socialists and Communists, and the party was able to force Largo Caballero's resignation in favour of a government which it could dominate. The pound of flesh turned out to include the liquidation of the Spanish Trotskyists of the POUM, and the party's leader, Andrés Nin, was duly arrested

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and murdered—possibly by Russian agents of the NKVD. Dr. Negrin, the new Prime Minister, was not a Communist himself (Mr. Thomas thinks that the extent of his commitment to the party has been exaggerated), but he was implacably determined to carry on the war, and this he could only do with Communist co-operation. The Ministry of Defence was held by Indalecio Prieto, Largo Caballero's old rival for leadership of the Socialists, but after a time he became convinced that further resistance was hopeless, and Negrin dispensed with him, although he himself was later to make fruitless offers of a negotiated peace. At the end of the war the Spanish Republic consisted of Negrin, the Communists, and Alvarez del Vayo, and its final scene narrowed down to this small group of men at an aerodrome waiting to fly to France, where the refugee camps of Languedoc were already overcrowded with Republicans.

Here too the exigencies of modern war had levelled the traditional contours of Spanish politics into a solid block better adapted to stand the impact of 20th-century life. Here too the regional forces had emerged as the losers. Had the Spanish Republic won the Civil War, it is doubtful whether Basques or Catalans would have kept the autonomy for which they had fought, and whose existence was only compatible with that of a weak Spanish state.

ENGLISH-SPEAKING readers have been rather lucky in recent years with the books on Spain available to them. There is Mr. Brenan's classic, *The Spanish Labyrinth*—surely one of the best political analyses of a nation to appear over the last twenty-five years. There is Franz Borkenau's *The Spanish Cockpit* which, although written at a shorter distance from events, runs it close. And, finally, there is Don Salvador de Madariaga's revised edition of his general work on his country.[5] Anyone who reads these three books will have a very good idea of the causes which produced the Civil War. Mr. Thomas has now provided an admirably fair and well-written narrative of the struggle itself and of such of the events preceding it as are necessary for understanding.

The fairness is especially striking. It is not for nothing that Mr. Thomas has been praised both in *The New Statesman* and *The Tablet*. I should judge his sympathies to be on the government side, but he is never partial and often (as in the case of his figures of executions) he disperses Republican mythology to some effect. I can imagine that his book will displease partisans, but that is a compliment for a historian. No doubt, there are many questions which remain to be answered, but Mr. Thomas has sketched decisively the ground plan of this tangled piece of European history. The research that remains to be done may change the picture, but it does not seem likely to render it unrecognisable, unless the Russian archives reserve some shocks for the historians of 2061.

Perhaps there is another book which could be written about the Spanish Civil War, a book dealing with the effects of it on English intellectual life. Mr. Thomas takes in some of this—he devotes, in fact, rather more space to the International Brigades than they warrant in a book on this scale—but English reactions necessarily remain peripheral to the main story.

Why was Spain such a profound emotional experience for many of our intellectuals? Partly, I imagine, because of its exciting dramatic side. Here was a revolution which looked as one might expect a revolution to look with workers wearing red scarves, carrying rifles and picturesque bandoliers, all that colour and movement beneath the Mediterranean sky. The exotic surroundings and the uninhibited character of the Spaniards certainly supplied a psychological release for English intellectuals, enabling them to give expression to a theatricality of sentiment and gesture which would have seemed ridiculous at home. Spain freed them—much as a shy man may find it easier to make love in a foreign language. In this respect Catalonia or Madrid played the same role as the Greece of phil-Hellenism or the Italy of the *Risorgimento*.

But to this excitement was added a resolution of more specifically political tensions. Profoundly shocked by the depression at home and by the rise of Fascism abroad, English intellectuals during the 'thirties felt a certain impotence before a world which seemed to be going anywhere but the way of liberal improvement which they would have liked. They might join the Communist Party or demonstrate against Fascism, but they could not prevent the British political scene from being singularly out of tune with these striking gestures. There never was a real danger of Fascism in Britain during the 'thirties, and attempts to identify Mr. Baldwin with Hugenberg or Papen simply did not work. British left-wing intellectuals remained ham-strung by the unsuitability of their surroundings for the part in which they had cast themselves, unable to achieve identification either with the British working classes or with the embattled revolutionary intelligentsia of a Europe whose problems could not be theirs.

[5] Salvador de Madariaga, *Spain* (Revised edition, 1942).

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Spain offered a genuine opportunity of fighting for the progressive cause in a country whose people still preserved that attractive, pre-industrial dignity, which has always appealed to the English upper- and middle-classes. So that, in England as elsewhere, Spain could be a symbol which polarised and intensified political disagreements. The civil war, whose causes were so complicated, took on a splendid simplicity when seen from London or New York or Paris. Soon it became an international ideological war, and this fruitful misunderstanding was to produce some good memoirs, much bad literature, and a great painting, *Guernica*. Intellectuals from all countries flocked to Spain, some were killed fighting there, and of those who returned to England, many did so minus the political innocence with which they had set out.

FOR ENTHUSIASM for the anti-Fascist cause is only one side of the influence exercised by the Spanish Civil War on English intellectual life. As important as the emotion which sent young men to join the International Brigades was the disillusionment with Communist skullduggery which they acquired there. Up to then left-wing intellectuals had hardly reacted to the Russian purges or to such episodes as the liquidation of the kulaks. In Spain, however, the NKVD could be seen at work. The destruction of the Trotskyists, the activities of the infamous SIM (*Servicio de Investigación Militar*), the intrigue and lying propaganda of the Comintern, were not easily ignored by those who were brought face to face with them, however politically naïve they may have been.[6] All the abuse heaped on inconvenient witnesses such as George Orwell could not prevent one result of the Spanish Civil War being a strong reaction against the ruthless opportunism of the Moscow line. The fighting in Barcelona and the death of Andrés Nin did something to set in motion a process of public enlightenment which has continued throughout the years. *Homage to Catalonia* was certainly one of the most damaging books about Communist behaviour ever to appear, and time has done little to lessen its impact. Nowadays it would be difficult to find anyone prepared to take the word of a perfect stranger regarding his non-membership of the party as implicitly as the Duchess of Atholl took that of the young Arthur Koestler, and for this Communists only have themselves to blame.

A DETAILED HISTORY of some of these Communist intrigues, those leading up to the resignation of Largo Caballero, has been written by Burnett Bolloten.[7] Mr. Bolloten fills in much detail which was necessarily omitted by Mr. Thomas and, in so doing, provides one of those books of meticulous research which the Spanish Civil War needs, if various disputed questions are to be cleared up. We could do with a book like his on the two months before its outbreak and also on Colonel Casado's plot at its very end. It is when one comes to the moral to be drawn from Mr. Bolloten's diligence that there is room for dispute. The substance of his book is that Communists try, by fair means or foul, to infiltrate into positions of political power if they are given half a chance, and that they did this on a large scale and with great success during the first year of the Civil War. All this can hardly be questioned, and one is grateful to Mr. Bolloten for having followed these shadowy doings with such care. But what conclusion is to be drawn from them?

Communist activities during the Spanish Civil War have usually been written about from two points of view. They themselves regard the actions of the Comintern and the Spanish party as displaying a political skill, energy, and realism which alone kept the Republic going for so long, and, paradoxically enough, this is accepted by those who fought on the other side, in whose mythology international Communism plays the part of the great adversary suitably adorned with diabolical trimmings. But there is also the view held by the non-Communist left that, by their suppression of a popular revolution as well as by their constant eye to the furtherance of the party at the expense of the common cause, the disservice done by the Communists to the Spanish Republic outweighed all their discipline and fighting-power. It is this theory which received its most powerful support from Orwell, though he was to admit later that a larger dose of revolution would have done nothing to increase the Republic's powers of resistance. After reading Mr. Thomas it now seems to me impossible to subscribe to this latter version of events.

For, as Mr. Brenan has put it in his *Spanish Labyrinth*, the Communists

> had a dynamism that no other party in Government Spain possessed. In their discipline, their organising capacity, their drive, and above all in their understanding of modern military and political technique, they represented something new in Spanish history.

[6] There is an interesting account of this process in a novel by Humphrey Slater, *The Heretics*. As political commissar to the XVth International Brigade he presumably knew what he was talking about.

[7] *The Grand Camouflage*. By Burnett Bolloten. Hollis & Carter, 30s.

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Anarchist columns and trades union militiamen were all very well in street-fighting or when asserting a numerical superiority over isolated garrisons and posts of civil guards, but to combat the Army of Africa something else was needed: the organisation of a professional army backed by the services usually provided by a modern state. This only the Communists could supply, and this was why they came to form the armature of the Spanish Republic. Unfortunately, the price that had to be paid for their efforts was a high one, but Negrin's willingness to meet it was a condition of continued resistance. If arms from the West had been available in large quantities, things might have been different, and the Socialists with their Castilian austerity and sense of the state might have been able to provide the impetus required. As it was, there was no alternative to Communist domination of the Republic. Largo Caballero's resignation was the final act of a political career during which he had been largely responsible for delivering his party into Communist hands. The Spanish Lenin turned out to be the Spanish Kerensky, but Kerensky, at least, never deceived himself about the Bolsheviks.

THE INEVITABLE CONCLUSION is that, if we regard the long-drawn-out defence of the Spanish Republic as desirable, we must accept the fact that it was only Communist participation which made it possible. The old conflict between means and ends is felt here in acute form, and, had the Republic emerged victorious from the war, it seems likely that many of the values which it was felt to represent would have been lost. Of course, it might also be asked whether continued resistance with the human suffering it entailed was a good thing. Would it not have been better for the government to surrender when it became apparent that the fight was hopeless. Here Orwell's reply is surely the only one possible:

> Whether it was right... to encourage the Spaniards to go on fighting when they could not win is a question hard to answer. I myself think it was right, because I believe that it is better even from the point of view of survival to fight and be conquered than to surrender without fighting.

There are many conceivable developments in international affairs during the late 'thirties which would have made the endurance of the Republic of the greatest possible importance. As it turned out, the democracies were not much damaged by the existence of the Franco régime in Spain, but nobody could have foreseen this. The architects of non-intervention were, in a sense, proved right by the Bidassoa meeting in 1940, but they did not deserve to be.

MUCH MORE DOUBTFUL is the question at what point the Civil War became inevitable and whether it could or should have been avoided. At a distance it looks rather as if the decisive moment had been the Socialist-engineered Asturias rising of 1934. However excusable this may have been in terms of immediate provocation from the right, it had the effect of destroying any chance of forming a parliamentary left-centre, the only combination which might have prevented an appeal to arms. With the anarchists representing a policy of sectarian violence and the army determined to use its strength to stop any measures distasteful to itself the Republic was besieged on all sides. The only solution would have been a strong centre group devoted to peaceful reform and the maintenance of parliamentary institutions. The Asturias rising rendered this impossible and thereby made a clash inevitable. For this, once again, Largo Caballero must bear a heavy responsibility. If there is anyone who can be named as having done his best to bring about civil war, he is that man.

But no single judgment on the Spanish Civil War can be entirely satisfactory. A reading of its history is more likely to stun us with a sense of national catastrophe or blind us with a realisation of the infinite depths and heights to which human nature can attain. From the gruesomely ludicrous atrocity to the act of pure heroism this war was full of exemplary instances, in which humanity appeared untouched by the bureaucracy of paper and machines. If it can no longer teach us anything as political animals, it can at least move us as sentient human beings. And it is possible that out of this more tranquil interest a deeper understanding will arise than that afforded to the partisan or the propagandist. In the kindly, implacable light of history Republicans and Nationalists seem to have more in common with each other than either of them did with their foreign admirers.

"A Spanish tragedy"—yes, but if tragedy can be held to reach a higher level of abstraction than that attained by any other form of the human drama, the universality of Spain and its civil war will, in future, be seen in function of the intensity, rather than of the direction, of events. When it is no longer possible to tell who was on which side of the barbed wire, there will remain the rumour of a passion which might have taken the form of love, but which, for three terrible years, went to found a democracy of death, a land where, as Unamuno said, each man must hate his neighbour as himself.

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Really Necessary?

MR. ALEC NOVE has well described both the predicament of the Bolshevik leaders, faced in the 1930s with the necessity to industrialise, and the peculiar element of paranoic despotism introduced by Stalin personally. I find his arguments ["Was Stalin Really Necessary?", ENCOUNTER, March] convincing within their stated framework. There is only one point where it seems to me that he is historically wrong. He argues that Stalin came to power because there were many in the party who felt that he was best fitted to lead during the difficult period of industrialisation. But the truth is that Stalin achieved his political supremacy between 1922 and 1925, when this period was not yet in sight, and that he rose to power essentially as the spokesman of "normalisation" and the (relatively) quiet life in contrast to Trotsky's *"de l'audace, toujours de l'audace."* Of course there still remained nuclei of opposition to him within the party after 1925, but none of them was ever in a position to unseat him. He held all the key positions. His rise was surely simply due to a genius for understanding how to handle a political machine, and for recognising which positions gave real power as opposed to mere public prominence. He got power before he knew which policies he was to pursue, and he subsequently changed his policies more than once.

But in his first paragraph Mr. Nove raises the interesting and far wider question of the relevance of Stalin's career and the CPSU's economic predicament to other under-developed societies. Here I think there is more to be said, and would like to make some scattered points. I hope that Mr. Nove, who felt it necessary to insert some rather obvious but neglected moral propositions in his article, will forgive me if I restate some equally obvious but often forgotten propositions which, though undoubtedly familiar to him, are not necessarily familiar to those concerned with modernisation of underdeveloped societies, not even always to those of such persons who are readers of ENCOUNTER.

RUSSIA'S industrialisation was carried out not just by a tough dictatorship, but by the dictatorship of a Marxist party. It may well be argued that dictatorial methods were necessary to modernise Russia, and may prove necessary to modernise other countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, but at the same time it may be that Marxism is a most perverse doctrine on which to base such dictatorial methods. Marxism, of course, is not just a belief that the initiative must be taken by the state. Obviously in countries with very little indigenous private capital, if for understandable political reasons the rulers do not wish to depend on foreign private capital, then the only answer is state enterprise. But Marxism is not just a doctrine of state enterprise. Marxism involves a whole complex of doctrines about society, including contempt for the peasantry as a class and for all the values of rural society. It is arguable that doctrinaire Marxism has been a disaster for Russia, and that the successes which have been achieved are due not to Marxism but to the combination of dictatorial methods with immense natural resources and huge reserves of manpower. It is arguable that without doctrinaire Marxism the resources would have been more efficiently and more quickly exploited. It is arguable that the industrialisation achieved under the first two Five Years Plans was needlessly and extravagantly wasteful. It is a matter not of argument but of fact that Russian agriculture has remained inefficient and unproductive ever since the 1920s, even if there has been some improvement since Khrushchev took over. It is not unreasonable to suppose that this is largely due to the basic opposition of the Russian peasantry to collectivisation. In short, the conclusion for the underdeveloped societies should be, not that Marxism has a scientific answer to all problems but merely that, if you have the natural resources of Russia (which the new States have not), and if you use dictatorial methods, you can modernise quickly.

The rulers of Russia were not only Marxists but Bolsheviks. The special contribution of Lenin, the essence of Bolshevism, was the formula of the "party of a new type," which concentrated power at the top and maintained a military discipline for non-military purposes. Lenin, as Mr. Nove says, was not "an Oriental despot," but he was a man of despotic temperament who was unmistakably master of his party, and had shown ever since 1903 a marked reluctance to have independent-minded people around him. His partnership with Trotsky from 1917 to 1921 was the one significant exception, and one must wonder how long it would have lasted if Lenin had remained in good health at the helm for another decade. Certainly Bolshevik doctrine, as it has developed since 1917, does not lay down that the party itself must be an autocracy. But not only was the first Bolshevik leader an autocrat, but he was succeeded after a brief period of struggle by a second and more despotic autocrat, and he in turn was succeeded after a briefer period by a third somewhat less despotic autocrat. The built-in tendency towards autocracy looks as if it is (in communist jargon) "no coincidence," as

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if there is some inherent connection between Bolshevism and autocracy.

But if one should logically distinguish between dictatorship and Marxism, Marxism and Bolshevism, and Bolshevism and autocracy, one should distinguish all these from totalitarianism. Totalitarianism implies the permanent and total mobilisation of the whole people. Dictatorship prevents people from doing certain things, totalitarianism tells them what to do and say and think. Totalitarianism admits no rights of private life as such, and recognises no morality other than the will of its leaders. Totalitarianism is possible only when two conditions are fulfilled —availability of modern mass media of communication, and the will to total power of the leader. (The fulfilment of these conditions does not of course mean that there *must* be totalitarianism, only that there *can* be: without them there cannot be.) In Lenin's time the first condition was not fulfilled, and whether the second was fulfilled is a matter for argument. In Stalin's time both were fulfilled. In the late 1940s the Soviet Union outwardly seemed very close to an "ideal" model of totalitarianism, though one must doubt whether the party had in fact overcome private life and family loyalties. Under Khrushchev there has been a retreat from the more grotesque features. Nevertheless the Soviet Union is still rather totalitarian than merely dictatorial. Totalitarianism was completed in the Soviet Union *after* Stalin had been in power for some years, and *after* the main tasks of industrialisation had been completed. There are no grounds for believing that totalitarianism is necessary for industrialisation, but there is some *prima facie* evidence for the view that totalitarianism is a natural consequence of a Marxist-Leninist autocracy. In any case, totalitarianism is something which the underdeveloped societies would do well to avoid.

THE COMMUNIST REGIME in Russia was set up, not to industrialise Russia but to spread world revolution. As we all know, the original purpose receded into the background, while industrialisation took first priority. However, the original purpose was never abandoned and the implacable hostility to the rest of the world remained. As Mr. Nove notes, encirclement by the capitalist world played an important part both in deciding the type of industrialisation and in removing Stalin's opponents within the party. It remained a justification for police terror until Stalin's death. The doctrine of the hostility of "the imperialists" still remains an important part of the internal propaganda of the régime. The use of a foreign bogey as a means of strengthening a government's hold on its people is of course a political device far older than the Soviet régime, but Stalin brought its use to an unprecedented perfection. This is something that the new States would do well to view with reserve.

Unfortunately they show very little reserve. Pan-Africanist and Pan-Arab imperialisms (Egypt's designs on its southern neighbours, or Nkrumah's designs on Togoland) are supported by fiery denunciations of "neo-colonialism," in which they are joined by the Soviet propaganda machine. Indeed, Moscow is sedulously advertising to them a brand-new model bogey of "neo-colonialism" manufactured with loving care by the Agitprop department of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b). The new nations would do well to look this gift horse very carefully in the mouth.

In conclusion, dictatorial methods may sometimes be necessary for modernisation (though it does not follow that they are always the best), but doctrinaire Marxism, totalitarianism, and systematic xenophobia are not aids but obstacles to progress.

Hugh Seton-Watson

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Life & Letters Today

New York

THE LITTLE TOWN *of Katonah in Westchester County, N.Y., is all aboil because some of its citizens have discovered in a new history of the village a single word that they think makes Katonah too pro-Russian. The word is "stirred." In Chapter 20, a passage states that "we were tremendously stirred by the Russian sputnik launched on Oct. 4, 1955." Certain of the villagers, in an excess of patriotism, argue that "stirred" is a word favourable to the Muscovites. No true-blue citizen of Katonah should have been "stirred." He ought to have sat back on his haunches and said it didn't happen. Now a faction in Katonah wants to call in the history and have the word changed to "concerned," or something else. The difficulty is that some 900 copies already sold in and around Westchester County are doubtless subverting that radical community into believing that a Russian could stir Katonah.* WASHINGTON POST

London

THE GRILLING *began just before noon. For once a press conference devoted to the work of an artist had all the excitement of one grilling a politician during a crisis.... "L'Année Dernière à Marienbad" (which opened this week in London as "Last Year at Marienbad") has provoked the same questions wherever it has been shown in Europe—What really happened at Marienbad? What did not happen? . . . Had Alain Resnais been influenced by James Joyce in creating a cinematic stream of consciousness? M. Resnais replied he had never read anything by Joyce and did not know his style. A gasp came from an eavesdropping Joyce fan at this downright reply.* THE GUARDIAN

Washington

THERE *is something in the very air of this space age that is not unlike the climate of another great age of discovery which took place in the 15th century. Then, as now, man was in a period of depression and anxiety.* The Nuremburg Chronicle, *in a colophon dated July 12, 1492, left six blank pages on which to record the events from that date until the Day of Judgment.* WASHINGTON POST

London

THE ENGLISH *have begun, but only begun, to brush the dust off their ideas about Italy, a subject they learned about too early, like cotton-spinning and steam-locomotion. The country of those charming early E. M. Forster novels, all love, beauty, and sloppy courtesy, where "the people ceased being ugly and drinking beer, and began to drink wine and to be beautiful," is no longer with us. Instead there are worried men with brief-cases, engineers rushing off to technological conferences, mechanics punching clocks.* SUNDAY TIMES

Moscow

EURIPIDES' *"Medea" opened ten days ago and is sold out as far ahead as performances have been announced. Nothing quite like this production of "Medea" has ever been put on in Moscow. Medea's revenge is seen as that of a soul driven to destroy all by the blind cruelty of fate. It may be that a measure of the powerful impact the spectacle brings to some of its beholders is a feeling that there, but for a whim of destiny, they might have stood during the terror of the time of Stalin.*

"Medea" is being presented in Tchaikovsky Hall, which is a monument to one of Stalin's victims in the arts, V. E. Meyerhold, a producer, who died during World War II in a Siberian labour camp. The hall was designed to Meyerhold's specifications with a view to putting on just such spectacles. But by the time it was completed in 1940 Meyerhold had been arrested.... Audiences sit in solemn horror as the tragedy unfolds and they emerge from the hall pale and visibly shaken. NEW YORK TIMES

Washington

SOME *of the letters to Washington furiously denounce "a Left-wing brain-truster of the Kennedy administration—fellow by the name of Alexis de Tocqueville." Sen. Fulbright had quoted him in his statement, supporting a Defense Department directive notifying armed services personnel to get themselves out of politics. A number of letters reportedly denounced this "damned foreigner" and asked why we didn't use American brains.*
N.Y. HERALD-TRIBUNE

London

WAS *it after all in the libraries of Eton, rather than on the playing fields, that all those battles were won? Dr. Robert Birley, Head Master of Eton College, said yesterday: "Laying aside the provision of a chapel and a bare minimum of classrooms, I would rather a school have a good library than anything else—an assembly hall, science laboratories, a gymnasium or playing-fields."* THE GUARDIAN

London

Q.—*Does your movement attract more beatniks than other movements?*
BERTRAND RUSSELL—*I don't know what a beatnik is. I don't know the word. Oh. The question is about beards. That's journalist humbug. We have the same percentage of beards as other parties.* N.Y. HERALD-TRIBUNE

Sheffield

BRITISH *Railways have refused to help a school to produce* The Ghost Train. *Mr. Hall, teacher of drama and English at Beaver Hill School, asked the British Transport Commission to lend him railway uniforms for the production. The request was refused, with the explanation that London headquarters considered the play to be derogatory to British Railways.* THE TIMES

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BOOKS & WRITERS

E. H. Carr's Success Story

By H. R. Trevor-Roper

WHAT IS HISTORY? As the materials of historical writing expand in extent and in depth, bewildering the laity, depressing the student, and almost drowning the historian himself, we constantly hear this question. Sometimes we also hear answers. History, answered Ranke, is factual exactitude. History, answered Carlyle, is the biography of great men. History, answered Burckhardt, more persuasively but less precisely, is the record of what one age finds noteworthy in another. But none of these answers quite satisfies us, and more recently the answers have become longer and darker. So we have been enchanted by Delphic interpreters, men who have inhaled magical fumes and then, with their priestly robes whirling around them, utter magniloquent dithyrambic rigmaroles. Unfortunately these high-priests of history are not always familiar with the ground they tread, which can be unfortunate. Catching an exposed naked toe in some unheeded irregularity, they are apt to fall down, heavily and painfully, in mid-gyration; and the observers, after sympathetically picking them up, look for less spectacular interpreters. Working historians, who have taken many a small tumble over small facts in their private practice, are more likely to keep their balance, we think, than these inspired amateurs—provided always that these working historians are not tied to their own exiguous plots but lift their minds occasionally to general questions and ask themselves what, after all, they are doing and why they do it.

Mr. E. H. Carr is such a historian. As the author of a massive history of Soviet Russia he knows the rigours of historical method. But he is also a social thinker. And he is practised in the strategy and tactics of criticism. Many a lightly-envenomed dart, issuing with musical twang from the opaque forest of the *Times Literary Supplement*, has afterwards been identified—at least as long as one could rely on the affability of the forest-rangers—as shot from his blow-pipe. Moreover, he can write. Unlike the prophets, he can be both brief and clear: often tantalisingly brief and formidably clear. It was a happy idea of the electors to choose him as the G. M. Trevelyan lecturer at Cambridge and thus to lure him, with all his apparatus and expertise, his barbed shafts and varied experience, out of his silent labour and that now less penetrable thicket. And it was a happy idea of his to lecture not on the Bolshevik revolution in the Bashkir republic (although even on so narrow a topic he would certainly have found himself involved in controversy) but on the great general question: what is History?*

AND WHAT IS HISTORY, according to Mr. Carr? He begins, as we all do, by knocking down a few rival theories, some of which have to be set up again for the purpose after their last and (as we had thought) final fall. We all agree now that history is not merely the collection and arrangement of facts, or the accurate use of documents. Facts must be selected, and selection requires a principle of selection. Documents must be interpreted: their circumstances as well as their content must be considered. And then, behind the facts and documents, there is the missing dimension which we must supply. Documents are written by individuals, often individuals from a narrow class; but history is the history of whole societies, or at least of individuals in society. So, behind the two-dimensional record of the past, we must see the three-dimensional reality. We must acquire stereoscopic vision. On all this we now agree, and our agreement is gratifying to our pride. It enables us to hold our heads higher if we feel that our study is not, as Dr. Johnson thought, the least exacting of the arts but, as Fustel de Coulanges declared, the most difficult of the sciences.

* E. H. CARR: *What is History?* Macmillan, 21s.

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HOWEVER, let us not hold them too high. "Difficult" is a noble word, but it may be too mild for our predicament. Perhaps we should say "impossible," and before impossibilities we are all equal. For if Thucydides could only see through the eyes of an Athenian official, how can we hope to see except through our own? Why should we claim stereoscopic vision if all our predecessors lacked it? Mr. Carr is certainly very firm towards them. All history, he says (or implies), is subjective history. By denying altogether the solidity of facts (reversing a phrase of Sir George Clark, he writes of "a hard core of interpretation surrounded by a pulp of disputable facts"), and by declaring that documents are useless till they have been "processed" by the historian, he makes history dependent on the historian; but having done this, he then, with perfect logic, devalues the historian himself. For is not the historian, too, a mere social product, his work a "document" to be "processed" like any other? Historians, he sensibly insists, are not outside history: they are part of it. Therefore the reader must take account of them as such. "Study the historian before you begin to study the facts," he says, somewhat summarily; and so he studies them, somewhat summarily too. George Grote, the 19th-century historian of Greece, was an enlightened radical banker; therefore his picture of Periclean Athens is merely an allegory of 19th-century England as seen by an enlightened radical banker. Mommsen's *History of Rome* is similarly dismissed as a product and illustration of pre-Bismarckian Germany. Sir Lewis Namier's choice of subject and treatment of it simply show the predictable prejudices of a Polish conservative. Meinecke was a chameleon who changed the colour of his history four times according to the colour of German politics in his long life. In fact, there is no such thing as historical objectivity. "A writer is more likely to reflect the period in which he lives than that about which he writes," he says of Gibbon; and of a critic who doubts this he says that the critic, being a 20th-century critic, would doubt. In other words, no historian *can* write history: he can only write about his own time, seen through his own eyes, the eyes not of an individual but of a conditioned social type. After our sudden elevation we are back where we began, only lower.

IS THERE THEN no escape? we ask. Is it not even conceivable that a historian may, by industry and genius, overcome these formidable barriers? Might not even a slave-owning Athenian aristocrat, or a tithe-eating medieval monk, or a securely endowed fellow of a rich Cambridge college, though obviously a product of his social situation, nevertheless observe and interpret at least the contemporary history whose three-dimensional form lies perceptible before him?

So we may ask; but the grim realist of Trinity, Cambridge, mocks our romantic illusion. It is a fantasy, he feels, only worthy of Oxford historians, the mere thought of whom—in spite of, or perhaps because of, a brief stay in that university—makes him particularly merry. In Cambridge they face the facts. And the fact is that there is only one way of escape from the otherwise universal impossibility. If a historian will recognise that he is a slave he may, to a very limited extent, become free:

> "I shall venture to believe [writes Mr. Carr] that the historian who is most conscious of his own situation is also more capable of transcending it . . . than the historian who loudly protests that he is an individual and not a social phenomenon. Man's capacity to rise above his social and historical situation seems to be conditioned by the sensitivity with which he recognises the extent of his involvement in it."

In other words "objectivity" is attained by swimming *consciously* (not unconsciously, like Grote, Mommsen, Meinecke, Namier, and Co.) with the stream.

But what, we may ask, is the stream? Here, alas, we come to a difficulty. Hitherto we have been on firm and largely common ground. Most modern historians agree, in general, that facts are subject to interpretation, that documents must be seen in their circumstances, that historians cannot be divorced from their background. But when they look out from this common ground into the watery waste of history itself, they do not by any means agree about its invisible currents. The 18th-century historians saw a constantly flowing tide. Their 19th-century successors felt less sure and decided that more observations were necessary. In the 20th-century the observers have been so fascinated by their task that many of them are far below any conceivable tide or current, dredging deeply in small pockets of ooze. Even those who study the currents seldom agree about their motion. Some see only a moving watery maze which they despair of reducing to any cartographical system: history, they say, is just a meaningless swirl of events with perhaps some little regularities here and there but no general significance. Others, like Spengler and Toynbee, see great, slow, cyclical eddies.

But Mr. Carr deals summarily with these illusions. True to his own injunction ("study the historian before you begin to study the facts"), he despatches them as members of socially declining classes in politically declining societies. And having thus despatched them, he

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gives us the result of his own observations. Like the 18th-century historians, he has discerned a clearly flowing tide. Swim in this, he tells us, and you will swim far. Follow me, and you will not only find the water (though somewhat cold) refreshing and invigorating: you will also have a delicious sense of movement; and as you move you will be able, at times, to lift your noses serenely above the water and enjoy the agonies of less "objective" philosophers of history who have failed to recognise and comply with the irresistible current. In particular, you will enjoy the spluttering and gurgling of "two distinguished gentlemen" whom Mr. Carr harpoons with particular relish each time he sees them, or thinks that he sees them, surfacing in the stream.

THE INVITATION is tempting, the sport clearly exhilarating; but let us keep to our main problem. Fundamentally, it is the problem of historical objectivity. It must be clear already that Mr. Carr has his own definition of objectivity. The old liberal historians conceived of historical objectivity as a capacity to stand apart from the historical process, to be uninvolved in it, and, by listening fairly to all sides, to judge historical events without *parti pris*. The development of historical knowledge, the deepening of historical understanding by such new sciences as sociology and psychology, have naturally complicated the making of such judgments, but (say the liberals) they have not necessarily made it impossible. They have merely added new factors to be taken into consideration. A liberal historian to-day recognises that historical judgment is extremely difficult, that it must be made against the background of the time, and that the forms of the past differ from those of the present; but he still believes that judgment—tentative and provisional no doubt—can be reached.

Mr. Carr's view is very different. According to him, the irresistible involvement of the historian makes it impossible for him, as an individual, to attain any independence. The old liberal concept of objectivity is, to him, meaningless. But this does not mean that we should stop at that. That were cowardly despair. No, we must set up a new standard of "objectivity." The question the historian should ask about any action in the past is not, was it truly reported, not, was it "right" morally or tactically or politically in the circumstances of the time, not, is it fully understood in the light of those circumstances, but, did it forward the March of History, did it speed Progress towards the ultimate goal to which mankind, by the force of its evolving social laws, must move? For history (says Mr. Carr) is a forward movement.

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What may seem blind, impersonal forces (but they are really analysable social forces) predetermine its course; forward-looking men press along it; enlightened politicians lubricate it; "objective" historians plot and chart it and by their interpretation—by forgetting all the deviations and digressions, obliterating the doubts and hesitations, isolating the single track which leads through the present to the future—use the past to assist the enlightened politicians in swimming, with them, consciously down the stream.

PERHAPS I HAVE over-simplified Mr. Carr's argument, just as he over-simplifies the arguments of those from whom he dissents. But let me express it in his own words. What do we mean, he asks, when we call an historian "objective"? And he answers: "not, it is clear, simply that he gets his facts right, but rather that he chooses the right facts, or, in other words, that he applies the right standard of significance." But what, we interpose, is "the right standard of significance"? The answer is: relevance to the future. Objectivity, in an historian, means "the capacity to project his vision into the future" and thereby gain "a more profound and more lasting insight into the past than can be obtained by those historians whose outlook is entirely bounded by their own immediate situation." In short, "the historian of the past can make an approach towards objectivity only as he approaches towards the understanding of the future." The standard of objectivity is "a standard which is laid up in the future and is evolved as the course of history advances." "The ultimate criterion of historical judgment" is "in the future." In other words, "objectivity" means, not being "objective" in the hitherto accepted sense of the word—i.e., being uncommitted, dispassionate, fair—but the exact opposite, being committed to that side which is going to win: to the big battalions. This, to say the least, is an inconvenient confusion of terms: it obliges us, from now on, to distinguish between two entirely different meanings of the word "objective." From now on, if I use that word without quotation marks, I am using it in the pre-Carr sense which I hope will remain its standard usage; if I enclose it in quotation marks, I am using it in Mr. Carr's novel and opposite sense.

The implications of Mr. Carr's doctrine are obvious. If "the right facts," which a "right standard of judgment" should select as significant in any historical situation, are those which lead to the future, it must be assumed that the course of history is determined—for otherwise chance might intervene and "the right facts" would suddenly become wrong. Mr. Carr is therefore a determinist. Indeed he glories in the title and pours scorn on those who, like H. A. L. Fisher, recognise a place in history for "the contingent and the unforeseen," or who waste time in the futile "parlour-game" of considering "the might-have-beens of history." "History," he explains

> is, by and large, a record of what people did, not of what they failed to do: to this extent it is inevitably a success-story. Professor Tawney remarks that historians give "an appearance of inevitableness" to an existing order "by dragging into prominence the forces which have triumphed and thrusting into the background those which they have swallowed up." But is not this, in a sense, the historian's job?

And he proceeds, in his usual brisk way, to "clear up the muddle" by ascribing any interpretation other than his own to the enfeebling social circumstances of those who express it. It is only when people want to undo history, he says, that they ask whether it might not have happened otherwise; therefore it is only in contemporary history that they consider such alternatives. Nobody now asks whether the Norman Conquest might have been averted, because nobody now wants to reverse it; so nobody minds when historians write as if it were "bound to happen." It is only when the same is said about events like the Russian revolution, which have damaged or threaten living interests, that protests are aroused. Therefore, historically, determinism is generally allowed: to reject it (we are told) is a sign of "intellectual laziness or low intellectual vitality."

SO WE ARE swept along: right and left the "muddles" of other writers are "cleared up," and the necessary intellectual substructure is neatly tucked beneath the new definition of objectivity. Only if we are quick and forceful can we break in with obvious objections.

For instance, is it true that no one, unless an interested party or a player of "parlour-games," considers "the might-have-beens of history"? The historian, as Mr. Carr says, "like any other scientist, is an animal who incessantly asks the question, Why?" But if so, must he not always be considering precisely such alternatives? It is a question not of bias but of explanation. Whoever presumes to state the cause of an event is *ipso facto* stating what would not have happened in the absence of that cause. It is quite true that a historian's motive in exploring such possible alternatives may arise from his own preferences. It may be inspired by personal hatred of his enemy or political hatred of his cause. But equally it may arise from a desire to test his own explanation rather than to utter it dogmatically. In any case, whether the motive is commendable or not, such exploration is an essential part of historical method. Mr. Carr,

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who ostensibly objects to moral or political judgments (but scatters them liberally in these pages whenever rival historians cross his view) ought to be the first to recognise this.

Let me give an example. In an earlier work (*The Soviet Impact on the Western World*, 1946) Mr. Carr says summarily that

> the overthrow of feudalism and the victory of bourgeois democracy in England and in France *could never* [my italics] have been achieved except by way of the Cromwellian and Jacobin dictatorships.

This is a strong phrase. It not only states a cause: it excludes all alternative explanations. But how can Mr. Carr, or anyone else, justifiably make such a statement without at least considering the alternative possibilities? Nothing that he has ever written suggests to me that he has ever made any such enquiry and many things that he has written (including some things in this book) suggest that he has not. I think that in respect of the Cromwellian revolution at least I have made a considerably deeper study than he. My conclusions may not be right; but in fact, after such a study, I am convinced that "the overthrow of feudalism and the victory of bourgeois democracy" could have been achieved in several other ways; so far from owing all, it may have owed nothing, nothing at all, to the "Cromwellian dictatorship," which may even have positively retarded it. This is not because I wish that feudalism had survived —I do not—nor because I wish that bourgeois democracy had been halted: it is because I wish to understand what happened, and why it happened. And I do not see why the enquiry which I have made for this purpose should show greater "intellectual laziness or lack of intellectual vitality" than Mr. Carr's acceptance of a dogma which conveniently excuses any such effort. An historian who skips over the alternative possibilities merely because they were not immediately realised (although they may have been realised in the long run), or who writes off all that is accidental or contingent by confusing it (as Mr. Carr regularly does) with what is trivial, must seriously misjudge historical situations, human motives, and the course of events itself; and without these, what *is* history?

Consider another great revolution: the European Reformation. For a generation and more before Luther raised his voice in Germany, there had been a movement of reform throughout Europe: a movement out of which the revolt of Luther grew, which that revolt distorted and temporarily monopolised, but which it did not completely extinguish. For long afterwards the historians of Europe largely ignored this movement. They saw the Reformation as a frontal

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struggle, and Luther as its prophet. As for the earlier movement, if they saw it at all, it was as a mere twilight before the dawn (or, if they were Roman Catholics, before the night); and so they hurried past it to the great struggle, which they continued, between Light and Darkness. But in seeing it thus, of course they transformed the past. They thrust men who had never heard of Protestantism prematurely into the "Protestant" camp or implicitly censured men as feeble "appeasing" Catholics before there was a force to "appease." Only in this century have historians approached the watershed period before the Reformation in a less anachronistic way. In doing so, they have given new depth to history. They have revealed, instead of rival dogmas of which one was right and the other wrong, a European crisis of conscience. By looking past the ideologies and the ideologues, by exploring the wider alternatives, reminding us of narrowly blasted hopes, they have made an age of obsolete religious dogmatism humanly intelligible.

Is not this a legitimate function of history? But neither these historians—men like Lucien Fèbvre or Marcel Bataillon—nor the school of historians they have inspired throughout Europe are mentioned by Mr. Carr. They are outside his philosophy. The author of *What is History?*, who quotes so many historians and debunks so many others, never even nods towards the author of *Métier d'Historien*.

To whom then does he nod? On the whole, Mr. Carr's dislikes are more obvious than his likes, at least among historians. His explicit praise is reserved not for historians but for the philosophers Hegel and Marx. But it is not difficult to see which of the great historians most clearly fulfils the role which he demands of them. According to Mr. Carr, the historian must not only believe in progress and be on the side of progress (many historians have done that); he must also see history "realistically" as that thin line of events which leads through the present to the future. If this entails imposing a pattern on the past—seeing it through the eyes of successful partisans, simplifying, even narrowing its complexity—that is not a defect: it is true "objectivity." In thus defining Mr. Carr's philosophy, have we not already pointed to the historian who most successfully applied it? Lord Macaulay did indeed see all history tending to the Whig society of 19th-century England; he did indeed see a continuation of that history leading to ever greater triumphs in the future; he did indeed select and arrange his evidence according to a standard "laid up in the future"; he did indeed regard history as the guide to political action; he was indeed ruthless to "the might-have-beens of history." He is, as Mr. Carr calls him, "incomparably the greatest of the Whig historians." And yet, as a "scientist," what did he do to advance the study of history? As a writer of sustained brilliant narrative he is unequalled; but as an interpreter he now seems far inferior to his "conservative" contemporaries, Ranke and Tocqueville. He also seems—as he seemed in his own day, not only to Tories but to Whigs like John Paget, W. E. Gladstone, and Lord Acton—somewhat vulgar.

Why does Macaulay, why (even more) do Froude and Motley, in spite of their great merits, seem vulgar? Is it not precisely because, in their conviction that the Glorious Revolution and the Protestant Reformation and the Revolt of the Netherlands were (as they surely were) "progressive," they refused to look fairly at the complexity of human situations? Macaulay had a wonderful grasp of political situations, but once he had grasped them, the human beings involved were ruthlessly thrust into categories predetermined by their relationship to his own politics. Persons and societies which did not accept his particular ideas of progress were caricatured, their ideas travestied or ignored. Whatever else Macaulay produced, he did not produce that three-dimensional picture which Mr. Carr himself, when he is despatching Thucydides or Mommsen or Meinecke, seems to regard as essential to social history. Macaulay's vision is not stereoscopic. Therefore, to-day, we find him readable—he will never cease to be readable—but unsatisfying. We realise that some of the men and classes and causes which Macaulay judged not worth attention because they were defeated, have yet somehow survived their defeat. Therefore they still demand attention, even on Mr. Carr's principle. The "success-story" of yesterday requires re-examination; the apparent dead-ends and might-have-beens assume a new relevance; and the reader may be excused if, to Mr. Carr's brisk philosophy of success, he prefers the words of Marc Bloch—that it is not only public faces or successful men and their ideas that history seeks to grasp, but the whole of human society: "the good historian is like the giant of the fairy-tale: he knows that wherever he catches the scent of human flesh, there his quarry lies."

THE NARROWNESS of success-stories, and the uncertainty of their success, could easily be illustrated, in spite of his genius, from the work of Macaulay; but it could as easily be shown, in spite of his talent, in that of Mr. Carr. Certainly neither Macaulay, nor even Motley, has carried the vulgar worship of success quite so far as Mr. Carr, who compares history with the record of a cricket season "studded with the names of those who made centuries rather than of those who made ducks

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and were left out of the side." Nor did Macaulay, even in his early essays, give quite such hostages to his critics as Mr. Carr has done in his earlier works. Perhaps it is unfair to press this point. Mr. Carr himself has said, in a disarming way, "I am fully aware that, if anyone took the trouble to peruse some of the things I wrote before, during, and after the war, he would have no difficulty at all in convicting me of contradictions at least as glaring as any I have detected in others." Nevertheless he has also ordered us, very categorically, to study the historian before we begin to study the facts; and we cannot therefore be wrong to study him as he has studied Mommsen and Meinecke. If we do this, we may discover some of the consequences of his historical philosophy.

For in 1939 Mr. Carr published an important book, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, in which he appeared, as so often since, as a "realist," cutting as ruthlessly through the "utopian," "idealist" verbiage of Sir Alfred Zimmern and Dr. Lauterpacht as he now cuts through the antiquated liberalism of Sir Isaiah Berlin and Dr. Popper. The upshot of his argument was that only the realities of power matter and that German power, and the ideas to which it gave force, must be respected as a *datum* in politics. The book was, as Mr. A. J. P. Taylor has recently called it, "a brilliant argument in favour of appeasement." A few years later, Mr. Carr changed his mind about the realities of power, and during the war, when he contributed largely to *The Times*, he became known as "the Red Professor of Printing House Square." But suppose that, in the 1930s, he had written a history of Germany, "objective" in his sense of the word, according to the evolving standard "laid up in the future," and disregarding "the might-have-beens of history." I have no doubt it would have been a brilliant work, lucid, trenchant, profound. No doubt it would have been acute in analysis and without crude error or misjudgment. Nevertheless, I wonder how well it would have worn: how "objective," in any sense of the word, it would have appeared to us now, when the Nazi success-story has ended in discredit and failure.

In fact Mr. Carr did not write a history of Germany. But his great *History of Soviet Russia* bears the same relation to *What is History?* which that unwritten history would presumably have borne to *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. For what is the most obvious characteristic of *A History of Soviet Russia*? It is the author's unhesitating identification of history with the victorious cause, his ruthless dismissal of its opponents, of its victims, and of all who did not stay

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on, or steer the band-waggon. The "might-have-beens," the deviationists, the rivals, the critics of Lenin are reduced to insignificance, denied justice, or hearing, or space, because they backed the wrong horse. History proved them wrong, and the historian's essential task is to take the side of History. Those whom History found wanting as politicians may not be heard even as witnesses of fact, even in order to be condemned. Whatever they believed, whatever they saw, whatever they said is ignored as irrelevant. Their very voices are silenced, and silenced with contempt.

No historian since the crudest ages of clerical bigotry has treated evidence with such dogmatic ruthlessness as this. No historian, even in those ages, has exalted such dogmatism into an historiographical theory. As Sir Isaiah Berlin wrote in his review of Mr. Carr's first volume (and perhaps it is this as much as the arguments in *Historical Inevitability* which has provoked Mr. Carr to pursue him so pertinaciously through these pages): "If Mr. Carr's remaining volumes equal this impressive opening, they will constitute the most monumental challenge of our time to that ideal of impartiality and objective truth and even-handed justice in the writing of history which is most deeply embedded in the European liberal tradition."

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MR. CARR ends his lectures with a profession of faith. In spite of all that others have said, or implied, or seem to him to have said or implied, he believes that history is the record of progress and that the historian should constantly back the forces of progress: should see them moving forward, should feel himself moving with them, and should notice and judge the past according as it moves towards him and through him to the future.

I should like to end with another profession of faith, which I hope will not cause me to be dismissed (like most of those from whom Mr. Carr dissents) as a hopeless reactionary, a pessimist, a sceptic who has lost faith in reason, or a mere theologian. I believe that there is, in history, such a thing as progress but that history does not *consist* of progress, nor is there only one method of progress—the method which in every instance was adopted. I believe that the historian must study historical contexts as much as historical movement—indeed (since movement is relative and conditional) that he can only study historical movement if he studies its context—and that both the study of social history and historical objectivity depend on his attention to that context; which he can only give if he looks at it not merely through his own eyes, or the eyes of those whose side he has taken, however acute, but also through the eyes of other men, their adversaries, or rivals, or victims.

For thus, and only thus, can history really be three-dimensional. Historians *can* acquire stereoscopic vision. They can do it, as good dramatists do it, not by plugging a doctrine or by constantly pronouncing their own verdicts, but by showing their characters or situations from all sides, through other eyes as well as their own. The same historical character, the same historical situation, appears differently when seen from different angles, and by different contemporary observers; and its rounded reality is presented by combining these separate aspects. An historian who looks at (say) the Earl of Strafford or his work only from the social situation of the future sees with as narrow a vision as if he looks at him only through the eyes of English members of the Long Parliament, or Irish planter-gentry, or royalist courtiers, or contemporary theorists of absolute power. To see objectively he must see through all these eyes. To say that he cannot, that he can only see through his own eyes, conditioned by his own circumstances, although all those other eyes were open, is not to utter a philosophic truth: it is merely to describe a bad historian.

Bad historians make bad politicians. Even in the narrow practical sense, I do not believe that a politician will learn to forward progress

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merely by studying the form which progress took in the past. If he studies the past at all, he must study the circumstances, the opposition, the alternatives. Only from the real world of the past can he draw useful lessons about the real world of the present. As for the historian himself, who has a wider aim and seeks, without tactical purpose, to understand the past, his duty is even more categorical. If he fulfils it, he may find himself agreeing with Gibbon not merely when he says (and here Mr. Carr quotes him) that "every age of the world has increased and still increases the real wealth, the happiness, the knowledge, and perhaps the virtue of the human race," but also when he says, in another mood (and here Mr. Carr does not quote him), that history is "little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind."

Dragons and All Deeps

New Maps of Hell. By KINGSLEY AMIS. *Gollancz*, 16s.

A PUBLIC image of this author as an *enfant terrible* is fairly firmly established. Indeed, such reaction to the Amis name seems almost congenital. Magnus, in his *Dictionary of European Literature*, mentions the 13th-century "Papa Amis" as a "burlesque hero of adventures of wit, cunning and horseplay," and a few pages further on censures Mrs. Aphra Behn, neé Amis, for her "grossness of taste." From this a theory could perhaps be worked out, giving some Jungian excuse for common misapprehensions about the current incumbent. Some such excuse is certainly necessary: for Amis could only appear as a terrible child to a lot of old women. His real characteristic, as seen in his novels, is more the *"mâle gaieté, si triste et si profonde"* which Musset saw in Molière.

This is a temperament once common in English literature, but which seems to have rather petered out since the days of Fielding and Dickens: a robustness, an independence of mind, an imperviousness to received ideas. When such a generous and vigorous writer expresses his own thoughts and feelings, and in his own way, rather than following the patterns laid down, his first book of criticism is likely to be important. And here we have Mr. Amis saying, in effect, that our long-established tradition of fiction is grossly inadequate, that it omits a whole hemisphere of the imagination. I take this to be a major, a revolutionary assertion.

AUGUST 1914

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Mr. Amis is not being provocative for provocation's sake—in fact *New Maps of Hell* is written in a thoroughly unpretentious way, with amenity and humour. For, thank heaven, in spite of his imposing credentials (and the book is, moreover, based on lectures given at Princeton's Christian Gauss Seminars In Criticism, under Professor R. P. Blackmur's chairmanship), he is not a literary establishment figure slumming, patronisingly and ignorantly, among a "cultural phenomenon." Mr. Amis simply says that since the age of twelve he has been a keen reader of modern science-fiction, because he found that it filled a need not catered for by what science-fiction fans call "mainstream" literature, in which he was doubtless getting interested at about the same time. This is a feeling that many people have had: *New Maps of Hell* I take to be not a creator of change, but a sign of change, a comet flaring, as in the Bayeux Tapestry, over a community sunk in superstition.

For, whatever the reasons, we have gradually reached a position where the average cultivated man is likely to be considerably more introverted than the norm, to be attracted excessively to what others may regard as *"le spectacle ennuyeux de l'immortel péché."* It need hardly be said that in previous cultures the literature-defining audience was not of this narrow type. Even in ours, the best have often retained an interest in the actual. If we look, for example, at the poets of the 1930s, we find that while the lesser figures were interested in Literature and the Human Soul, Auden was interested in psychology, pit-heads or the Constantinescu gear for their own sake, not primarily as book-fodder. It seems natural that he was by far the best poet. (Of course, poets have often, far more than novelists, been interested in mere science and, perhaps even more important, disinterested in mere personality: "His sense of other people's very hazy.")

Science fiction particularly strongly illustrates revulsion from the barren extremes of subjectivity. But to say that it thus fills a want, corrects an imbalance, is not to make extravagant claims for its quality, as Mr. Amis rightly points out. Though he once wrote in a review that an average issue of *Astounding* showed as much imagination and intelligence as one of *The London Magazine*, this is not the same thing as claiming *The Space Merchants* to be superior to *War and Peace*. The very modesty with which Mr. Amis actually concludes this book constitutes a powerful position: "At least a dozen current practitioners seem to me to have attained the status of the sound minor writer whose example brings into existence the figure of real standing." This is particularly so when we remember how young a *genre* modern *sf* is. It is not a rare thing for a vigorous new art form to start off at a very crude level—Latin rhymed poetry is an instance. But the improvement since the thirties is phenomenal, and might perhaps be contrasted with a certain decadence in conventional fiction, particularly the short story.

While the *genre* has attracted readership, sympathy, and comprehension from many of Amis' generation, it has left others, and particularly the most highly professionalised students and critics, baffled and ignorant. But if current methods and attitudes cannot cope with a new phenomenon, do they not stand exposed as useless *even in their fields of normal operation*?

A few years ago the *Observer* held a competition of science-fiction short stories. I do not know how the judgment was carried out, but the results—as Mr. Amis points out—were so lamentable that they plainly proved the existence of a barrier rather like that with which Mr. Robert Heinlein separates two parts of the United States in one of his Future History stories. With one admirable exception (a story by Mr. Brian Aldiss) all the successful entries would have been rejected and rightly rejected by any reputable science-fiction magazine. The judgment not only showed, presumably, that ignorance of the *genre* prevails among literary persons who are nevertheless prepared to judge it, but also an astonishing crudity and vulgarity of taste. Yes, it was revealed that literary training does not produce a natural good taste, but simply habits of mind adequate no doubt to their home fields but completely disorientated when transported elsewhere. I think it is obvious that there is a test of a truly trained judgment. If two men who have seen only representational art are suddenly transported to their first show of abstracts, whether they like the method or not I should expect the one who had developed his taste at once to choose the Légers or Moholy-Nagy's as the best. The man who had simply learnt some conditioned responses would no doubt go wrong. That a similar thing can occur on apparently a large scale in literature is rather shocking.

It shows what work there is to be done by the man who thinks for himself, like Mr. Amis. Highly informed academics without judgment are mere reflex-reproducers, not critics but criticism machines. They could be replaced in any reputable future by CRITIC (Cultural Reflex Intensity Tester and Impulse Co-ordinator—the new desk model from Interplanetronics, Amis and Twelfth, Luna City,

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Whenever, and in whatever field, temperament has tried to impose an ideological monopoly, the ideological élites which have risen to the top have been unable finally to repress broader human feelings. So it seems to be with the introspective critical élite which has for some decades been trying to enforce inadequate canons on the educated reader. Real devotees of a literature confined to the subjective are hostile to *sf* to a degree, and in a tone, which takes them far beyond the mere logic of their position. There is an unreasoning revulsion even from its physical novelties: faced with non-terrestrial life-forms, or with the abysses of space, they seem to cry helplessly, in something like the words of the Prayer Book, "from dragons and all deeps, good Lord deliver us."

One sees an extraordinary narrowing of perspectives, of any outward look at the size and variety of the universe, of the operation of possibility, of the great vistas of Time. In another context I recently experienced a notable example of this myself. In an introduction to an anthology of East European verse, I had said of *Dr. Zhivago*, "It seems perfectly possible that in the far future the Soviet régime may be remembered only for its recent suppression of that great novel." A critic, writing at some length, held that this was a stupid remark: ancient Athens was remembered for more than the suppression of Socrates. Now, of course, my phrase was essentially a rather dramatic way of putting an important point about the relative importance of culture and politics. But, even so, it can only be regarded as formally impossible by a defect of the intelligence or of the imagination (or, as probably in this case, of both).

The Greek comparison is naturally ridiculous: for one thing, "Ancient Athens" cannot be compared with a particular régime—what do we remember the Forty Tyrants for? But it goes far deeper than this. The future is likely to last more than 2,000 years! There is a perfectly good sense of the word "remember" by which even now the Emperor Shih Hwang Ti is remembered only for the Great Wall, the unification of the Chinese state, and the burning of the books. After the passage of certain cycles of time, the Wall may no longer exist, and the Chinese state be the vaguest memory, its territory even having sunk into the ocean through geological change. And yet the Emperor's name might still be remembered as an archetypal book-burner, like various names which have accidentally survived in our own proverbs. Curiously enough, a comparable notion occurs in a story by Murray Leinster, in a recent issue of *Astounding Science Fiction*—"...the wealth of fabled Ind. Nobody knew what 'Ind' was any longer, but it was a synonym for fabulous and uncountable riches." Literary men must learn to be less parochial.

This is one instance of what I mean by an imbalance. For even if one accepts the view that the human psyche is the most important, or the most interesting, object in the continuum, that does not necessarily entail an almost total abdication of interest in anything else. In the past even the great novelists of character took an interest in the external world too, for its own sake and not simply as a backdrop. This is not, of course, to argue that introspection should be abandoned, but just that a balance should be struck. And the signs (not only in *sf* proper) are that the long reign of monopolistic introversion is coming to an end. Mr. Amis rightly adduces some of the work of William Golding as borderline science fiction. It is, in any case, another sign of a return to the principle of Aristotle that "character" should be subordinate to the story and, indeed, merely a development of the story.

Naturally, people should read what they like, according to their temperaments. But with the man who sets himself up as a literary expert the case is different. To him I would put two propositions: if you can't tell good *sf* from bad, your expertise is exposed as worthless; and if you can't understand *sf*, you are, in some important respects, uneducated. I hope, in any case, that you will not be afraid to read this stimulating, scintillating book.

Robert Conquest

Sovietologist

The Anatomy of Soviet Man. By KLAUS MEHNERT. *Weidenfeld & Nicolson*, 30s.

SOVIETOLOGISTS are, on the whole, a much-maligned breed. Popular sentiment has it that Russia is an enigma wrapped in a mystery (or was it the other way round?), and that there are only varying degrees of ignorance. On the basis of this mistaken assumption, Soviet affairs became in the eyes of many a field wide open to all kinds of charlatans and soothsayers. Charlatans there were and are, as well as ill-informed or splenetic types, but by and large each newspaper has the practitioner it deserves, and the level of the craft as a whole is neither higher nor lower than that in any similar profession. A great amount of knowledge was

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amassed by the experts in the West even during Stalin's lifetime, and much more since 1953, but very little of this has percolated down to the general public, including unfortunately many of the supposedly well-informed. This is partly the fault of the Sovietologists themselves who, instead of patiently spreading factual information, sometimes prefer to peddle their own pet ideas. Sometimes they tend to forget their own limitations; it is a matter of lasting regret that no editor apparently ever told Mr. Alexander Werth to stick to literature and the arts and to steer clear of politics. But all in all the Sovietologists have not been doing too badly; the main problem to-day, in any case, is not lack of knowledge but on the contrary the disparity between the experts' knowledge and the general ignorance of the public. Klaus Mehnert has contributed as much as anybody on the European continent to a better understanding of the Soviet Union, and the success of his last book—400,000 copies of which were sold in Germany alone—is well deserved. Some of this success undoubtedly has extraneous reasons—Mehnert is a well-known television personality in West Germany; but his intrinsic qualifications are impressive: born in Russia some 55 years ago, he lived in the Soviet Union for years as a student and subsequently as a foreign correspondent, and has toured the country more widely than probably any other Westerner. Mehnert is an excellent observer and raconteur and is (as the title of the book indicates) mainly interested in the human aspect of his subject. But he does not underrate the importance of ideological factors; in one of his previous books he presented a most lucid exposition of Stalinism. His reading of contemporary Soviet literature is impressively wide and he must be one of the most indefatigable theatregoers on record, believing (quite correctly) that certain aspects of Soviet life have been better illustrated on the stage than anywhere else. About Dr. Mehnert as a political prognosticator and proponent of dynamic policies the present writer has not always felt equally enthusiastic, but in his new book one finds only a few doubtful or objectionable statements.

The Anatomy of Soviet Man (it should probably be physiology) roams over many aspects of Soviet life, and reflects the author's conviction that the Soviet people has been affected to a far lesser degree by Bolshevism than is generally assumed in the West, and that (especially in recent years) there has been a definite "retreat from politics." Not for nothing has Mr. Daniel Bell's *End of Ideology* fascinated Soviet writers, though they cannot of course give it any favourable mention. Having lived for many years in both the United States and the Soviet Union,

6

Brendan Behan's Island

an Irish sketchbook

From the snug of the 'Shaky Man' (probably the nearest pub to Guinness's Brewery in Dublin) Brendan Behan takes us on a tour of his native country—North, South, East and West—always with an eye on the people and their habits rather than on the places themselves. He was accompanied on many expeditions by Paul Hogarth, whose drawings complement the text as no other artist could have done. Enlivened with song, poem and story this book tells a lot about Ireland but tells us even more about that fascinating human Behan. Brendan, the 'Borstal Boy' who took the world by storm, is with us again—but under happier circumstances; the wit and frankness is up to all that could be expected from the author of 'The Quare Fellow' and 'The Hostage'.

BRENDAN BEHAN
with drawings by
PAUL HOGARTH

Hutchinson

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Dr. Mehnert finds that the average American identifies himself more closely with his state and government than the average Russian does with his. Dr. Mehnert stresses the political importance of the emergence of a public opinion in Russia:

> So long as the decision rests solely with the Kremlin, war on ideological grounds and as the outcome of national power-politics is possible; if the voice of the people should ever begin to carry more weight, the danger from ideological pressures would be reduced, while the danger from power-politics would not automatically disappear....

What made this book a best-seller is its simple yet convincing language, its common-sense approach, the writer's natural gift of observation and ability to tell a story. In most books on Russia there is a certain lack of human warmth, of emotional undertones; these would perhaps be out of place in a book on the Soviet political and social system, but they make a book on "Soviet man" easy to read and attractive. It seems to me that the English edition reads even better than the German original; but, unfortunately, more than one quarter of the German text has been omitted, including most of the passages apparently considered "difficult" by the publisher—references to and excerpts from novels, plays, ideological and political discussions. This somewhat reduces the value of the book, which in its English version too often reads like a string of anecdotes (albeit interesting ones). We are told on good authority that it has been translated into Russian and a limited edition of 100 copies has been distributed to trustworthy party members and propaganda officials. Be that as it may, Soviet magazines and newspapers have in recent years more often referred to Dr. Mehnert than to any other Western expert; he seems to be one of the few Western writers with an attentive public on both sides of the curtain.

Walter Laqueur

Sainte-Beuve

Sainte-Beuve. A Portrait of the Critic 1804–1842. By A. G. Lehmann, *Clarendon Press*, 63s.

The Memoirs of Chateaubriand. Edited and translated by Robert Baldick. *Hamish Hamilton*, 35s.

In times when French criticism rated more highly in the world than it does to-day, Sainte-Beuve was regarded not merely as "the prince of French critics," but as The Great Critic. The decline in his reputation in his own country is due to a number of different factors —changing views of the function of criticism, the feeling that the long leisurely essays and still longer and more leisurely books belong to a bygone age, his connection with the now unpopular Romantic Movement and his failure to understand writers like Stendhal, Baudelaire, and Nerval who to-day stand high in our affections—but a particular importance attaches to Proust's attack. Although Sainte-Beuve's admirers try to play it down, it seems evident that the appearance in 1954 of *Contre Sainte-Beuve* did heavy damage and has never been adequately answered.

In England Sainte-Beuve enjoyed a good press from Matthew Arnold down to the advent of the "new criticism." D. H. Lawrence declared roundly that for him Sainte-Beuve was a "great critic." Mr. Eliot, writing about the same time, said that if he was a literary critic there is no doubt that he was a very good one, but concluded, significantly, that "he earned another name." Sir Harold Nicolson wrote a life which was intended as part repayment of a debt to one whom he regarded as a mentor, but he was not really equipped by temperament or training to do justice to Sainte-Beuve's finest work, *Port-Royal*, and his horrifying picture of the man detracted considerably from the force of his tribute.

Professor Lehmann thinks that the balance needs redressing. His book, though pleasant to read, is a long one. He devotes nearly 400 closely printed pages to Sainte-Beuve's first thirty-eight years and breaks off little more than a third of the way through his career as a writer. Nothing can make Sainte-Beuve a sympathetic figure and Professor Lehmann is content to scrape off some of the mud thrown by his predecessors. He is charitable to the man who stole his best friend's wife and then proved such a disappointment in bed, but his final comment on the affair with Adèle Hugo makes depressing reading: "no elopements, no daring adventures, no decisive ruptures, much tenderness, much mawkishness, but little passion." The period when the famous critic took to pawing young women admirers and seducing his servants did not begin until after the book ends. The professor admits that Sainte-Beuve was in many ways a weak character, but argues that he tried hard to become a man of integrity. He is right in saying that if he had many enemies he had quite as many devoted friends, but one has the feeling that the portrait flatters the sitter because it leaves out the violent antipathies which he aroused in his later years.

In his discussion of the writer Professor Lehmann emphasises the variety of the roles he filled:

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> Now a poet writing up to his idol, now a religious polemist, now a political commentator, portrait-writer, literary historian, reviewer of the week's best-seller, professor, gossip-columnist.

He has no illusions about the poet, but is far too kind to the ramshackle *Volupté*. There is a wholly admirable chapter on *Port-Royal*, but the plan of the book precludes a detailed assessment of the lectures on Chateaubriand or the *Causeries du lundi* which did not begin until 1851.

The *Lundis* are at once his most celebrated and his most controversial work. It must be said in fairness that no one who studies the French authors on whom Sainte-Beuve has written can afford not to look up what he says about them, but the traditional objections remain valid. He was a man of great erudition and considerable psychological insight with a genuine interest in culture, but he was not primarily interested in literature or a literary critic. His greatest quality was probably his unwearying curiosity, but it went with a singular lack of discrimination. He seems to have had little sense of the enormous gulf which existed between many of the writers with whom he dealt. He regarded his weekly article as a job: the subject depended very largely on the review books which accumulated on his table. Once the choice was made, he gave the author, great or small, what may be called "the full treatment." It was here that the versatility which Professor Lehmann commends stood him in bad stead. Instead of writing as a literary historian or critic, or even as a responsible literary journalist, he became what his subject made him: the reviewer of the week's best-seller or, worse still, the gossip-columnist. His lack of discrimination was sometimes extraordinary. Professor Lehmann is able to produce a convincing answer to the charge that he underrated Balzac, but the case of his treatment of Stendhal, Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Nerval goes by default. What is depressing about the *Lundis* is their incomprehension of the great and their adulation of the small and the boring.

Professor Lehmann joins issue with those writers who see in Sainte-Beuve no more than the inventor of the Personal Heresy, but it is a fact that he was only completely successful when his own emotions were engaged. This applies particularly to his religious feelings. *Port-Royal* is an outstanding achievement because they were deeply involved and the decline in that work, as in his other writings, began when he reached the point at which he decided that religion was not for him. The value of *Port-Royal* as a contribution to religious history has been fully appreciated; it is not sufficiently recognised that it contains Sainte-Beuve's finest and most genuine literary criticism. Everything

Letters to a Vice-Chancellor

JAMES DUNDONALD

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ASA

Mr. James Kinross and Mr. Archibald G. Ogden wish to announce that they have joined the Board of ANTHONY SHEIL ASSOCIATES LIMITED.

This is a new Literary Agency, with a strong nucleus of established authors and promising new writers, in which Mr. Kinross will handle literary work, whilst Mr. Ogden's wide experience here and in the United States will be devoted to films and television. Both are highly conscious that new blood is essential these days, and are frankly interested in promising professional and intending professional authors. It is often more flattering to be a large frog in a small pool, and in any case, all our literary frogs are assured sympathetic professional handling at 6, Grafton Street, London, W.1. (Tel: HYD. 3861).

in it is a function of his search—his unsuccessful search—for faith. If spite made him clear-sighted in exposing Balzac's weaknesses as a novelist, the wistfulness of the disappointed seeker made him equally clear-sighted in discovering qualities which had gone unnoticed in the great 17th-century masters. Professor Lehmann thinks that he exaggerates the "social" element in literature and considers that the parallel between Corneille's *Polyeucte* and the "Journée du guichet" (when the seventeen-year-old abbess of Port-Royal refused her parents admission to the monastery to prevent interference with her vocation) is far-fetched:

> Corneille's *Polyeucte* is not finer in all respects than this incident which occurred in real life when he was a small child and it does not spring from a different inspiration; if *Polyeucte* moves and thrills us, it is because something of the same kind was and remains possible for human nature assisted by Grace. I will go further than that. If Corneille's genius could give us *Polyeucte* in its time, it is because something still existed in the atmosphere (whether Corneille was aware of it or not) which was capable of matching and reproducing the same miracles.

The parallel is a bold and a controversial one, but it seems to me to reveal an insight, the power of divination that we expect in criticism of the highest class, which is not to be found either in the early study of Corneille in the *Portraits littéraires* or in the much admired essays on that master in the *Nouveaux lundis*.

Sainte-Beuve appears to have been attracted among the 17th-century writers by three different types of religious temperament: the tranquil faith of a Corneille, the equally tranquil unbelief of a Molière, and the anxious questioning of a Pascal or (in certain moods) of a Racine. Comparing Montaigne and Molière, he writes:

> In Molière, as in Montaigne, we find nature in its pure form without the least admixture of anything belonging to *the order of Grace*; Christianity did not make the slightest impression on him at any age, any more than it did on Montaigne.... But if Molière like Montaigne is wedded to pure *nature*, I venture to say that in him it is richer and above all, more generous.

Professor Lehmann rightly describes the chapter on Racine as "magnificent." This is what he says of *Phèdre*:

> *La faiblesse et l'entraînement de notre misérable nature n'ont jamais été plus mis à nu.*

This short sentence brings out very clearly one of the main differences between the criticism in *Port-Royal* and the later work. Literature was not for the author of *Port-Royal*, as it became for the author of the *Lundis*, merely a subject

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for the weekly article or for gossip: it was part of the fibres of his being and the source of important truths about human nature.

It is not easy to give the flavour of the study of *Athalie* by brief quotations but there is one sentence which does suggest the unity and compelling power of that masterpiece:

> *Depuis le premier vers d'*Athalie *jusqu'au dernier, le solennel mis en dehors et en action, le* solennel-éternel, *articulé dès la première rime, vous saisit et ne vous laisse plus.*

On the fragmentary nature of Pascal's *Pensées* he has this pregnant comment:

> *Pascal, admirable écrivain quand il achève, est peut-être encore supérieur là où il fut interrompu.*

Chateaubriand et son groupe littéraire is not an achievement of the same order as *Port-Royal*, but it contains much that is useful and interesting. It also provides the literary sociologist and the psychologist with some excellent opportunities: the development of the ingenious theory of the literary "group;" the distinction between a Catholic "imagination" and a Christian "sensibility;" the analysis of the Romantic malaise in *René*, and this definitive judgment on *La Génie du Christianisme*:

> Le Génie du Christianisme *fut utile en ce qu'il contribua à rétablir le respect pour le christianisme considéré socialement et politiquement. Il le fut moins en ce qu'il engagea du premier jour la restauration religieuse dans une voie brillante et superficielle, toute littéraire et pittoresque, la plus éloignée de la vraie régénération du cœur.*

What Sainte-Beuve says, however, tends to emphasise the distance which separates us from Chateaubriand. An age which has made of Stendhal one of its idols can only share the idol's lack of enthusiasm for the arch-Romantic. His position as a man bestriding two worlds—the France of the *ancien régime* and the France which emerged from the Revolution—gives him a certain importance as what the French call a "witness," and he has a considerable place in diplomatic history. In the introduction to his excellent translation of selections from the *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*, Mr. Baldick describes him as "one of the most sensitive, complex, and eloquent of modern writers, admirable in his courage, monstrous in his pride, outrageous in his false modesty, and touching in his innocence." To-day we are more conscious of his exasperating traits than his complexity or his courage, but we can hardly help doffing our hats to the only man who "made" the otherwise impregnable Mme Récamier.

Martin Turnell

AESOP-TO-DATE

The travelling Kangaroo

A Kangaroo from Dublin Zoo,
A female of the species,
Was put inside a sort of ark
And shipped direct to Regents Park
Where every prospect pleases
But this marsupial had some doubt
If she would get her Guinness Stout,
And so she packed herself a few
Bottles of What is Good for You.

In England, when the Customs men
She failed to understand,
They searched her . . . ouch!
And in her pouch
They found the contraband.
Protesting was of little use
For ignorance is no excuse.

And so in future all beware,
When asked, "What have you to declare?"
Declare in accents loud and free—

Guinness
is good for you—and me
G.E.3627.C

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LETTERS

"The Idiot Box"

IN "The Idiot Box" [ENCOUNTER, March] Henry Fairlie complains that the writer is not treated with sufficient respect on television. If the example he gives of his own methods were representative, this would not be surprising. "Take the fully scripted programme," he writes

> The writer has done his research and written and delivered the script. The producer must then find pictures to illustrate it. It is at this point that the conflict will start——

—the conflict being between what has been written and the visual material available for use with it. But no scriptwriter, surely, works in so slipshod a fashion. A TV documentary script is based on what the camera can see: otherwise there would be no point in using television as the medium. Mr. Fairlie's method might be appropriate for a limited range of sound radio programmes, but not for TV.

Nor are writers, as such, so important as Mr. Fairlie thinks—and for a simple reason. If he compares the transcript of, say, two commentaries on a football match, one for sound, the other for TV, he will find that the TV commentator provides a kind of counterpoint to the picture being shown. Divorced from the TV screen, what the TV commentator says may make little sense; indeed, it may be gibberish. And the same may apply to a documentary. Half the skill of documentary production lies in making direct spoken comment unnecessary.

Mr. Fairlie might learn some lessons in the art from Tim Hewat of Granada, whom he calls one of the best of documentary producers, and praises for having "very little respect for the mysteries of the camera." From a considerably longer experience of working with Mr. Hewat I must point out that he has even less respect for the self-importance of script writers. It is not the mysteries, but the mystique of TV directors against which Mr. Hewat has been battling—their belief that there is a sacrosanct TV way of doing things. But a script for him, as for any good producer, is no more than a starting point; the camera then takes over, enabling the words to be cut down—sometimes eliminated altogether, as in *"A Sunday in September,"* where the film material was so satisfactory that the standard commentary could be dispensed with. This does not mean, as Mr. Fairlie implies, that the mind is taken out of television. If he had been a little less anxious to use the medium as yet another pulpit, and a little more ready to learn how to let ideas be implicit in a visual sequence, he would not have found his producers so unco-operative.

But where Mr. Fairlie's case against "the idiot box" really breaks down is in his refusal to consider the importance of the Television Act. He mentions the Independent Television Authority only in passing; and to ignore the significance of Sir Robert Fraser in this context is to stage *Hamlet* without the King. It is not the contracting companies—let alone individual producers—which are required to observe the provisions of the Act; the ITA exists to enforce them. To suggest, as Mr. Fairlie does, that the companies object to the presentation of particular points of view is consequently misleading. Some companies, admittedly, are not interested in controversy, or indeed in serious programmes of any kind; but others would be delighted to present more controversial material, if they felt safe to do so. But they know that they are not allowed to present a particular point of view (or to allow a commentator to do so) unless it is immediately balanced by the opposite point of view; and if they do so they will be in trouble with the ITA. (Agreed that the threat of the ITA is sometimes used as an excuse to duck out of some difficult situation; but often the reluctance to arouse trouble is genuine.)

To be fair to the ITA, it is not entirely a free agent. Mr. Fairlie will recall that he and I appeared last summer as script-writer commentators in a series of ATV programmes on Europe. The company did not dictate any line to be followed, and I do not imagine that Mr. Fairlie thought of himself as a propagandist for Britain's entry into the Common Market—any more than I did. Yet that was the accusation immediately levelled at the series by, among others, Mr. R. H. S. Crossman. And in a sense Mr. Crossman was right: because any programme of that kind, sympathetically presented, may be propaganda, and more effective than straightforward Beaverbrook-style editorialising. As such, the series could be held to violate the Act; and doubtless Sir Robert has his full share of politicians waiting to remind him of his duty on such occasions.

While the Act remains on the Statute Book in its present form, then, the kind of freedom of opinion that Mr. Fairlie wants—the same freedom a commentator has in a newspaper—will not exist. But it is unfair to blame the companies, let alone individual producers.

BRIAN INGLIS

London

ON READING Mr. Fairlie's article on Television, "The Idiot Box," in the March ENCOUNTER my attention was drawn to his paragraph on the one-hour feature programme on Berlin which he wrote for Associated-Rediffusion in 1960. I was the producer concerned, and in the interests of accuracy I should like to make one or two points.

I was instructed by Associated-Rediffusion at the very beginning, that is, as soon as Mr. Fairlie was contracted, that this programme must reflect the personal views of Mr. Fairlie on the Berlin issue. In this case, therefore, the company concerned thought so highly of this particular writer that it

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decided to give him his head, a courageous decision in view of the Television Act then and still in force. I was therefore obliged to carry out an order which did not coincide at all with my own personal viewpoint which is that so long as the Television Act is law, its strict injunctions to impartiality within a programme must be carried out, and that if an Act of Parliament is cramping in this way, then the method of altering it should not be to flout it, but to see that it is changed by parliamentary means, and that any change needs very careful thought indeed. That Mr. Fairlie's thoughts on the Berlin issue coincided with the policies of the three major political parties at the time is surely no argument for the jettisoning of the principle of "balance." In the first place, balance is surely not necessarily synonymous with agreement between political parties on any one issue, and, more important, if one accepts the principle of a writer's freedom to express a personal viewpoint on major issues to the exclusion or minimising of others, then a situation could easily arise where a writer was hired to express the viewpoints of many behind-the-scenes interests. Some writers, as Mr. Fairlie would be the first to agree, have a different sense of probity to his own.

Mr. Fairlie mentions an argument he had with me during this production. I remember it very clearly. It was about writing commentary for montage sections of the production where one is obliged, if points are to be made well, to accept the discipline of stop-watch and length of shot. Mr. Fairlie, being ignorant at that time of this side of T.V. writing, acceded in the end very gracefully, and we managed to keep a flow of writing to the dubbing unit. I was very impressed by the professionalism with which he immediately grasped some very difficult technical points under very, very rushed conditions. To work harmoniously with an untrained writer so that the best blending of word and picture (and therefore something akin to art) is obtained is the arduously learned and nebulously defined skill of the producer, which I feel that perhaps an individualist like Mr. Fairlie tends to underrate.

Another amusing side-light on this programme was that when Mr. Fairlie wished to cancel three speakers at the last moment because they no longer reflected the content of the programme, and I, agreeing with him, obtained permission to do so, it was I, the producer, and not Mr. Fairlie, the writer, who was obliged to carry all subsequent responsibility for unpleasant repercussions. This, from a free-lance writer's point of view, appears to be another useful function of the producer which he has overlooked.

CARYL DONCASTER

London

IN the March ENCOUNTER Henry Fairlie writes about an Associated-Rediffusion documentary programme produced about eighteen months ago. The subject was West Berlin. Mr. Fairlie says that "The immediate reaction to the programme by Associated-Rediffusion was enthusiastic, but it quickly cooled, and the reason I discovered later: the network of independent companies had objected to a programme which was composed of the straightforward presentation of a particular point of view."

Mr. Fairlie's writing and presentation of the programme was much admired. Our admiration for his work has not diminished to this day.

We received no complaints from any other television company. Mr. Fairlie cannot possibly produce any evidence to support his charges which are as unjustified as they are unworthy.

The charitable view is that Mr. Fairlie has been gravely misinformed.

JOHN MCMILLAN,
Controller of Programmes

Associated Rediffusion,
Television House,
London

MR. MCMILLAN says that I "cannot possibly produce any evidence" to support my statement about the network's reaction to the Berlin programme. This is true: as I said in my article, the network operates secretly and silently. Nevertheless, it is equally true that Mr. McMillan produces no evidence to rebut my statement; and there the matter must stand.

Miss Caryl Doncaster, as she says, was the producer of the programme. An exchange of compliments in public is embarrassing, but she taught me more about the excitement and strenuousness, as well as the techniques, of fitting words to pictures than I have learned from any producer since. Part of the strenuousness in this case consisted in two blazing rows—one in Berlin and the other in London—but I believe that this strain between producer and scriptwriter is inevitable in the preparation of a television programme, and that if it does not exist it means that one side—whether words or pictures—will win too easily.

I do not, of course, disagree with Miss Doncaster about the vital role which a producer, if only to carry the can, has to play. But I was writing, as I said, about the place of the writer in television and arguing only that it is diminishing and ought to be improved.

This point seems to me so simple and so obvious —and has been privately approved by so many (mainly, I must admit, B.B.C.) producers—that Mr. Inglis's objections are incomprehensible, unless it is that, since he vacated most of his corners in journalism in order to devote himself to television, he has lost all sense of a writer's responsibility for the ideas and words appearing over his name.

He quotes one-and-a-half sentences from my article in such a way as to suggest that I think that the original script, once delivered by the writer, is the end of his responsibility. Of course it is not: and I recall the non-stop forty-eight hours when Miss Doncaster, the film editor and I wrote and re-wrote, edited the film and re-edited it, until words and pictures did not offend each other; and

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the entire week-end I spent in A.T.V. House with the film editor on my contribution to the series on the Common Market; and there are other examples of which Mr. Inglis well knows.

Miss Doncaster—on arguable grounds, but ones which I do not accept—defends the "balance" laid down in the Act. Mr. Inglis opposes it. I still believe that the power of the Authority, whether for good or for evil, is of small concern compared with the huge, unofficial power wielded by the networking companies by their own private networking arrangements. This is the power that needs braking.

HENRY FAIRLIE

London

Castro's Cuba

An Exchange between Herbert L. Matthews & Theodore Draper

I NEED hardly tell you with what interest I read your latest contribution to the Cuban story [ENCOUNTER pamphlet, No. 6, 1s. 6d.]. Once again, I find myself in what you would call "an ambivalent" position because I find so much in your study to admire and agree with, and, at the same time, so much with which I disagree. Since you discussed my work I presumed you would be interested in my ideas.

I was really thrilled with your devastating analysis of the United Press-International's exceedingly bad coverage of the two speeches by Fidel, on December 2nd and December 22nd. As you may know, I have also been pointing out the misinterpretation by them, especially of the December 2nd speech. You may have noticed that the Hispanic American reports of Stanford University in its January issue likewise calls attention to what the U.P.-I. did, although not as well as you did. I think it is beyond question that the U.P.-I. has put over (I am sure inadvertently) one of the greatest historical hoaxes in Latin American affairs. It is now firmly embedded in the American mind that Fidel confessed he always was a Communist and was deceiving everybody. This myth was even used by Adlai Stevenson and Mrs. Roosevelt in a television interview I saw. I am going to suggest to Dean Barrett of the Columbia graduate school of Journalism that he put one of his students to the study you suggest about this example of "the perils of modern journalism."

So far as the general structure of what you write is concerned, I know it's impressive but I remain as unconvinced as I ever was that it's possible to make the kind of blueprint you draw for the Cuban revolution and for its major leaders. I still feel that you have taken a situation after the event and then found evidence to convince you that the development was inevitable, and on the part of some of the people involved, deliberately determined. You have even apparently convinced yourself that things were not so bad under the Batista dictatorship. All this, in my opinion, simply proves that you did not know Cuba and the Cubans in the sense that you did not realise how the Cubans felt. I do not think also that you realise even remotely the human and technical problems that Fidel had in carrying out his revolution.

Most of all—and I think this is one of the greatest weaknesses of your writings on Cuba—you do not know Fidel Castro and therefore ascribe to him ideas and feelings which are almost certainly incorrect. If you had known him better, or known me better, you would not have written in your very emotional ending to the article that "Matthews was tricked into reporting that Castro commanded a large force." There was no trickery involved. When I asked Fidel how large the force was, he refused to tell me. I guessed at the time that he had about 40 men and this was roughly correct because a number of the 26-of-July Movement had gone up to the Sierra at the same time I was there. Fidel admitted later he only had 18 rifles at that time. Commanders since the dawn of history have tried to make out their forces to be stronger than they are. I was fooled, and from then until the end of the insurrection every correspondent who went to Cuba overestimated the strength of Fidel's forces. You evidently forgot, or perhaps have not read, Che Guevara's book on guerrilla warfare. Fidel could have had a larger force from the spring of 1957 onward, if he had wanted more men. You evidently are not taking into account the elaborate preparations and the number of men and women involved in the organising of my trip to the Sierra Maestra. You also evidently do not know that at that time there was a powerful ground-swell in Havana and throughout Oriente Province against Batista. The one thing I claimed credit for in connection with the Castro interview was that I realised both his qualities as a leader and the fact that there was enough popular antagonism towards Batista to make Fidel Castro and his group a formidable force.

I do not believe you have at all proved your point that Fidel "deceived those who had believed in him." By this I simply mean that it is more likely that he deceived himself.

Finally, I think it is a pity that you have allowed your emotionalism about intellectuals to lead you to imply that Fidel Castro now has "nothing but contempt for" me. This happens to

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be 100 per cent wrong. I am sure that Fidel is disturbed by the highly critical position I have taken for a long time, but he has never done or said anything that would justify what you have written. In fact, the contrary is true.

I do not want to end on such a critical note. Let me say again that I feel you are doing something of great value in your continuing study of the Cuban revolution even though I disagree with much of what you have written.

HERBERT L. MATTHEWS
New York Times

WE SEEM TO READ each other with mutually mixed feelings. On many things, of course, we agree. Unfortunately, the disagreements happen to come at crucial points. At least it is still possible for us to discuss our differences with candour, and that in itself is no small boon. Your letter has forced me to reconsider these painful questions, and I have decided to go into them at greater length than I have done before, even at the risk of sending you a letter of more pages than you sent me. These are not easy problems, especially those of a personal nature, and I know of no short and easy way of handling them.

I am not sure that I can recognise myself in your third paragraph. For the second time, you accuse me of making a "blue print," and for the second time I must protest. I tried to make clear that I was presenting a "tentative theory" to account for Castro's peculiar development, and events since I put it forward over a year ago have not caused me to change my mind. I suspect that any explicit theory would seem like a "blue print" to you because, as you put it in your previous letter to ENCOUNTER, you see only "emotionality and irrationality" in the Cuban revolution (though this is not all you see). Is there nothing in between? Even the emotional and irrational may lend themselves to rational analysis; all historic events contain much emotionality and irrationality, but they do not prevent or preclude larger forces from operating at the same time. As I think I can show, you are not in this respect altogether consistent; you have given many explanations for Castro's behaviour that add up to quite a "theory." If I were to use your terms, I would say that you also have a "blue print," but it is implicit in what you have written and, therefore, less clear to your readers and perhaps to yourself. But more of this later.

You are equally wrong in imagining that I have convinced myself of the "inevitability" of the Cuban development. On the contrary, I think that the Cuban situation was very fluid in 1959 and that Castro might have chosen a different path. On one point, however, I am willing to plead guilty. I am satisfied that "some of the people involved" were quite deliberate in their determination of events. You yourself have written that two of the three top leaders, Raúl Castro and Che Guevara, were "pro-Communist." What is so far-fetched about the idea that they have acted quite "deliberately"? It is one thing to deny or doubt that everyone in this revolution has always known where he was going. But *some*?

On the next point, however, I am somewhat stunned. I cannot understand what led you to suggest that I have apparently convinced myself that "things were not so bad under the Batista dictatorship." I merely pointed out that the role of Batista in 1938–1944 was not that of the Batista of 1952–1958, and that Fidel, "without too much historical verisimilitude," has reviled Batista as always a bloody and hated tyrant. There can be no doubt that Batista's political career was far more varied and complex than Fidel has liked to make it; that is all I said. The imputation that I suddenly decided to whitewash Batista was quite unnecessary.

NOW AS TO who "knows" Castro. I am baffled by the certainty of persons like yourself that they "know" Fidel. I have never claimed to know him personally. I have studied his words and actions with some care. I have arrived at my views primarily on the basis of objective evidence, accumulated at no small cost of time and effort. You met him for the first time under very special circumstances in February, 1957. As far as I can make out, you did not meet him again until January, 1959, almost two years later. Thereafter, you spoke to him a few times, always as an outsider, even if a sympathetic one. Dozens of Cubans had infinitely more extensive and more intimate knowledge of him, and most of them lack your confidence that they really "knew" him or that he ever made it possible for them to "know" him truly. There are so many people who "knew" Fidel at one time or another and disagree so violently about him that this type of personal knowledge is obviously most treacherous or at least vulnerable. I cannot understand how you can believe that you could look into his real soul and penetrate his private mind by providing him with an audience on set occasions.

Do you really believe that he told you any more than he wanted you to believe or that he thought you might want to hear? Can you truly think that he confided to you anything but what happened to suit his immediate purposes? As a journalist, you had every right to listen to him and to use the information as you saw fit. But that is very different from getting to know the "real Castro."

You are annoyed because I wrote that Castro "tricked" you into reporting that he commanded a large force in February, 1957. Have you forgotten his performance before about a thousand people at the Hotel Astor in New York City in April, 1959, when, with much hilarity, he described how he had bluffed you into inflating the strength of his little troop of eighteen men? Many of those present cringed at his exhibition of poor taste at the expense of one who had done so much for him. Unfortunately, I understand that there is no text of his Hotel Astor speech, but it is not needed to prove that he had misled you. Your own article of February 24, 1957, contains the evidence. It states: "They have had many fights, and inflicted many losses, Señor Castro said." And, "'We have been fighting for seventy-nine days now and are stronger than ever,' Señor Castro said." And he also said that "Batista works in columns of

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200; we in groups of ten to forty, and we are winning." In your second paragraph of that article, not quoting Castro now but in your own name, you told the reader that the cream of Batista's army was "fighting a thus-far losing battle." All this was poppycock.

I STRONGLY DOUBT that your articles would have had such an electrifying effect if you had not personally vouched for Castro's large and winning force. You now claim that you "guessed at the time that he had about 40 men." Then why did you report at the time without any hint of scepticism his boast that he had "groups of ten to forty." And you gave a different version of this matter in your book. There you state that you saw about twenty-five and knew that others nearby brought the figure up to perhaps forty, but that where you went wrong was "to think the group I saw was a part of a large force" (p. 41). Your own article, moreover, shows that Castro helped you to go wrong. In any case, it was strange reporting to bear witness to a large force which merely existed in your imagination.

After complaining about my use of the word "tricked," you go on to admit that you were "fooled." And then you observe: "Commanders since the dawn of history have tried to make out their forces to be stronger than they are." So they have. Commanders since the dawn of history have practiced deception. Would it make much difference if I had written "fooled" or "deceived" instead of "tricked"? If so, I gladly withdraw "tricked" and substitute "fooled." The essential fact remains.

Having gone this far, I am going to continue, and try to tell you what has been so disturbing about your role in this entire affair. It has been a most unusual role for a journalist. How many journalists have been able to say, as you have said, that your articles "literally altered the course of Cuban history"? Therefore, your responsibilities have been unusually great. You have represented in this case the most influential newspaper in the United States, perhaps in the world to-day. Your words have been often quoted: "In all my thirty-eight years on the *New York Times*, I have never seen a big story so misunderstood, so misinterpreted and so badly handled as the Cuban Revolution." I am inclined to agree with you, but I cannot exempt you from your own criticism.

I do not wish to oversimplify. You have adopted a more and more critical attitude towards Castro's régime. Why, then, is your attitude still so disturbing? It is because, at crucial points, you always manage to find ways to justify what you claim to abhor—the turning over of the Cuban revolution by Castro to the Communists.

TWO CASES IN POINT, one from your book, the other from the *New York Times* less than a month ago.

In *The Cuban Story*, you wrote: "By the logic of the Revolution, Huber Matos was a traitor. Those who condemned the outrageous way he was treated, had to condemn the Revolution" (p. 155).

I gasped when I read those words. In the first place, you are one of those who profess to see no or little logic in this Revolution. When I propose a theory, you cry "blue print." What is one to call your "logic"? In the second place, your verdict is not so much logical as political. In your own words, Matos was condemned because he "had watched the growing strength of communism in the Army with alarm. He tried to argue the matter out with Fidel, but Fidel would not listen or even see him." So, in desperation, he resigned; he was arrested; he became a "traitor."

But a traitor to *what* Revolution? To the humanistic, democratic, non-Communist revolution that he had fought for? Obviously not. There can be only one answer. He was a "traitor" to the Communist "Revolution." But you do not say this. You justify his condemnation, and even the condemnation of those who protested against the outrage, by equating the Communist "Revolution" with "the Revolution." All that you had written previously should have made you come to the conclusion that the traitors were those who had sold out to the Communists. But, no, you manage to turn the case upside down before you are finished, and you join in Matos' condemnation on the ground that to resist the Communists, as he did, was to betray the Revolution. What avails all your protestations against the Communist trend of Castro's policy when you associate yourself with this kind of "logic"?

On February 17, 1962, the *New York Times* published an editorial, "Another Cuban Communist," dealing with the appointment of a top Communist, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, as President of I.N.R.A. What did the appointment mean? Here is what the editorial said: "What he [Fidel Castro] and his original associates obviously have discovered is that they cannot make a social revolution and run a country efficiently without training and without technically expert help." Carlos Rafael, though a Communist, has the training and technical expertness. Ergo, he was the right man for the job. Thus, the editorial said, "the revolution's leaders found that the only trained and prepared elements were the Communists."

Really, this is too much to swallow—in February, 1962.

In your book, you used exactly the reverse "logic" to justify the substitution of Che Guevara for Felipe Pazos as President of the National Bank of Cuba in November, 1959. Pazos was, as you wrote, "one of the most competent and internationally renowned economists in Cuba." But then you saw fit to add: "Yet, it was a logical move at that stage. Che knew nothing about banking, but Fidel needed a revolutionary, and there are no revolutionary bankers" (p. 103).

Thus, you employed one standard when Pazos was removed and another standard when Carlos Rafael Rodríguez was installed. Pazos's fate, moreover, glaringly reveals the incredible unreality of the editorial. Before and especially after Pazos, Castro and his group systematically drove out the trained technical and professional personnel with whom, for a Latin American country, Cuba was unusually endowed. Beginning in 1959 and with

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increasing momentum in 1960, Communists without the slightest claim to technical knowledge took over government department after department, factory after factory, position after position.

Carlos Rafael Rodríguez is the kind of Communist intellectual who has spent most of his life as a propagandist, a writer, a teacher, not as a working economist. He is no practical expert in agriculture, though he has written articles on agrarian reform, strictly according to the party line. In your book, you refer to him as a "newspaperman." He may or may not be an improvement over Núñez Jiménez who, by the way, was supposed to be just the right man with the right background for the job of running I.N.R.A. Soviet Russia is full of Communist economists who have not solved the food problem. In any case, the food crisis in Cuba was caused by the Communists and their servitors, and yet the editorial tells us that Fidel had to fall back on a Communist because "the only trained and prepared elements were the Communists." This premise is fantastic, but it serves the purpose of justifying another step in the Communist take-over.

I CANNOT CLAIM to understand you. On one page, you write that the "logic of the Cuban Revolution" was "reprehensible," and on another page you provide a rationalisation for making that logic work in the interests of the Communists. You berate me for making "blue prints," and you repeatedly take refuge in a "logic" with an implicit Communist blue print. You think that you know Fidel Castro with an intimacy that entitles you to a special status, and you were capable of saying as late as 1960 that "Americans should be praying" for Castro because "any hope of changing the situation for the better lies with him."

In your book, despite your misgivings, you acknowledge that you retain your "sympathy" and "in many respects, admiration for Fidel Castro." I suppose that you have not been able to retain this sympathy and admiration without being dragged into a logic which another part of you considers "reprehensible."

What is "knowledge" of such a man and his works? I have tried to get it by painstaking study of what he has said and what he has done. You think you have it because you have had several *tête-à-têtes* with him. In the end, there are objective tests for one's knowledge. It remains for others to say how we have passed them.

THEODORE DRAPER

New York City

Regina *v.* Penguin

MAY WE NOW turn our attention away from the poignant significances of a hitherto damnably obscure passage in this distasteful novel to consider what must now be done? As Mr. Sparrow implies, and we agree, the relevance of Literature to Life is such that at climactic moments we must, however reluctantly, have recourse to Action. Let us not be accused of "wanting to 'have it both ways.'" *Cf.* Goethe, "Epigramme" (Venedig, 1790). Hence: We demand, in accordance with English Law, that the case of D. H. Lawrence be reconsidered, however great the loss to the literary world. We propose withdrawal of his former condemnation to immortality by being misread by the distant and inattentive, for the following crimes and misdemeanours: (1) condonement of and panegyric for what we shall refer to in the latin tongue from whose southern land this practice originated; (2) "doing dirt" to the Laurentian sacro-sexual Creed; (3) committing underhanded literary indirection when we all expect and prefer the horrid details.

Were it not that we fear further breaches of decency on the part of the defendant, we would suggest that the penguins keep him company in Newgate.

Need it be said that an additional reason for Mr. Sparrow's particular objection to Mr. Lawrence's "startling belief" and indeed for England's so stringent legal sanctions against it is that it is supposedly a foreign, and even Southern, practice and therefore distinctly non-British. Not only Sig. Cellini and Sir Clifford can be called in evidence on this point, but even such a catholic and authoritative work as the *Kama Sutra of Vatsyayana* (*cf.* Paris edition, p. 104). Thus we see that Mr. Lawrence's views are not only low morally but geographically and anatomically as well. Thus, too, as Dr. Johnson rightly states, "It is observed that in Italy almost all assassinations are committed during the heat of summer."

A thorough seminar, supported perhaps by the Penguin shareholders, on the literary aspects of this distasteful practice and Mr. Lawrence's "remarkable" espousal of it would be valueless without the examination of other writers' positions. For example, Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* expresses a view apparently similar to Mr. Sparrow's. (*Cf. Molloy*, 1955, p. 76.) Mr. Norman Mailer, to cite but one additional example, brings up even more serious problems when he refers to an instance of this practice (*cf. Advertisements for Myself*, 1959, p. 449). The philosophical implications of his phrases are obviously far-reaching. The work of many other writers must be similarly investigated with very close attention.

ISABELLA HALSTEAD, JACQUELINE ROSS, JAMES ROSS

Villa delle Grotte,
Rome

I WISH Mr. Sparrow had not made out such a convincing case because it will give a useful weapon to Lawrence's detractors. I am afraid that the people who agitated to ban the novel will now say they were right after all. Whatever the truth

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of the matter, I am opposed to book censorship. I don't believe the novel will entice anyone to practise the vice that has been attributed to the Albigensians and Lord Byron. But much as I admire Lawrence as a novelist I think his whole attitude to women was distorted and pernicious. A devastating criticism, free from humbug, is contained in the second volume of Simone de Beauvoir's history of sex, now available in a paperback translation.

HECTOR HAWTON

Editor, The Humanist,
London

WOULD you please publish the following corrections to my letter (ENCOUNTER, March 1962) which, as it was erratically printed, embarrassed my Goethemanship? The quotation from the *Venezianische Epigramme* should read *"sie"* rather than *"Sie"* in both places; and I do, of course, know that Goethe did in fact "study Cellini" since he did a famous translation of his *Memoirs*.

FRANÇOIS BONDY

Paris

SURELY the tragedy of the *Lady Chatterley* experts is not that they didn't know what Lawrence was talking about or concealed what they knew, but that like anyone who tries to improve anything by conventional means they were forced into the position of having to defend the bad against the worse, of having to put phoney reasons for letting people read a book in the place of phoney reasons for not letting people read a book. This is bound to happen as long as we have laws intended to regulate literature or sex or anything else. I agree most strongly with what Colin MacInnes says about the hateful and irrelevant trial and about John Sparrow's equally hateful and irrelevant article, but even so I am glad we can now buy *Lady Chatterley's Lover* for 3/6d. in this country instead of having to spend much more in France or America. It is true that the way the book was freed has distorted its meaning for many readers, but it is also true that the trial will soon be forgotten while the book will always be remembered. Time will heal the tragedy of a few gifted people betraying their integrity for the sake of a great many less gifted people. I regret that men and women I admire had to waste time in a silly argument with Mrs. Grundy, but I rejoice that they won it. At least we can give her two fingers and read the book for ourselves. And I hope the same thing will happen with *Tropic of Cancer* and go on happening until the freedom to read is as wide as the freedom to think. If we can beat them with their own stupid rules let's go on until we are strong enough to make our own rules, which are no rules.

NICOLAS WALTER

London

Erstwhile the lover of the Lady C.
An upright, simple type was thought to be;
But now the Oxford Commissars insist
He was a backwing deviationist.

MORAL

It needs the prowess of an Alpha mind
To say what goes before, and what behind.

OSBERT LANCASTER

London

AFTER these terrific broadsides from experts, dons, and impassioned champions of "art," have you space for a still small voice from a human being (female)?

I have read quite a bit of D. H. Lawrence, much of it with admiration, but I am utterly astonished that people like Colin MacInnes claim for Lawrence's sexual philosophy a respect for *nature*. It is perfectly clear, for instance, that Lawrence resents the natural female orgasm (*vide* the "love" passages in *The Plumed Serpent* and elsewhere). And how many times does he hammer at the notion that the woman must be a "thing?" Myself I have always suspected this was a neurotic way of "getting back at" the irrepressible Frieda; indeed, most of the sexual episodes in his books—all those sweaty, earthy males "dominating" more-or-less aristocratic females—suggest a compensatory vision of himself getting even with Frieda.

Apart from his frantic violation of the order of nature, there is at least one other respect in which Lawrence does us all a disservice—his persistent dragging-into-the-light-of-day of the sexual act, and his perpetual nagging analysis of it. One of the more delicate and lovely elements of the sexual relationship is surely its *privacy*. (The misguided idea that nudism is a good thing also disregards the important charm of privacy.) And finally, if you put a live rabbit on a dissecting table and take it to pieces, you may, when you have finished, know quite a bit about how the rabbit was put together and how it worked, but the thing you have is no longer a rabbit. Lawrence does not enhance sex; he kills it with too much daylight and an anatomist's knife.

As, unlike Lawrence, I am shy of talking about this sort of thing in public, I hope you will allow me the twilight of a pseudonym.

PANDORA

Sussex

MEN have been known to fondle a woman's bottom without being accused of the proclivity to buggery (ask any girl who travels in public transport). To be inflamed by the "secret entrances" does not imply the phallic use of them. One has but to read Lawrence's essay "Pornography and Obscenity" (*Selected Literary Criticism*, Heinemann Mercury Books, page 32) to be impressed not only by his justification of sexual fulfilment between

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man and woman but also by his hatred of diversions from it, such as masturbation, and his attack on the vulgar confusions between the "sex functions and the excrementory functions in the human body. . . ."

HENRY ADLER

London

WHILE we might agree with Mr. Sparrow that his research reveals a failure of nerve on the part of Lawrence, we must also admit that it has only managed to place the whole Regina versus Penguin trial still further in its proper perspective as a great piece of humbug on *all* sides. We are further than ever from the purification that Lawrence wanted, for purification in his own sense he did want as the words "free . . . from . . . taint" amply testify.

It seems extraordinary that an age which has accepted the need for cultural relativity as defined by anthropologists and sociologists should be unable to keep apart the plain facts of sex and the values attached to them. We have suffered for nearly two thousand years from prejudices regarding sexual gratification inherent in the Judæo-Christian tradition, a tradition which in a thousand little ways is no longer regarded as absolutely binding by the overwhelming majority of the population. We may grant that public opinion is always behind the times and it seems very strange that we can still fight over *Lady Chatterley* so many years after a Sade, not to speak of a Freud or a Krafft-Ebing. We may also grant that all cultures contain some prohibitions against some forms of sexual gratification but we must also accept that the development of certain sciences obliges us more and more to disclaim all absolutes in this field of human activity and may even tempt us to use our knowledge, for once, in a creative manner. Here what Durkheim said about religion: that nothing is inherently sacred but that the quality of sacredness is added to things by men, holds also for sexual gratification. Thus we do not hereby deny the beauty, the poetry, the sacredness even, of sexual gratification. We merely question, with Lawrence or according to some vision of our own, whether sex at present is beautiful or poetic or sacred in the way we want it to be. And, above all, we recognise that artists have the obligation of searching for alternatives to a tradition whose only fine flower in matters of sex—the courtly love ideal —has now degenerated beyond all hope in the abysmal moonings of pop singers.

We do little honour to Lawrence, still less to ourselves, in permitting either the disgrace of an attack on his work by the prosecution or the makeshifts of the defence in hiding some of its implications, whatever these may have been. It would have been cleaner and saner in the long run for *Lady Chatterley* to have been damned for what it is than to have had it saved for only a part of what it could be.

NATHANIEL TARN

London

LIKE Darwin and Wallace, Messrs. Sparrow ("Regina v. Penguin," ENCOUNTER, Feb. 1962) and G. Wilson Knight ("Lawrence, Joyce and Powys," *Essays in Criticism*, Oct. 1961) have independently made the same discovery at almost the same time.

ALAN M. COHN

Southern Illinois University, U.S.A.

PERHAPS the oddest feature of Mr. Sparrow's article is, that having accused Lawrence of being "covert and oblique instead of being open and direct," Mr. Sparrow falls into the self-same trap.

He proves that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* concerns a perversion and is therefore obscene. He tells us that to him "the defence reeked of humbug," but refuses to come to any conclusion about this. Like Lawrence, at the critical moment Mr. Sparrow "lost his nerve" (though not before he had got in his dig at the Penguin shareholders gloating over their illicit profits).

The *real* point at issue in the trial was, not whether this particular book was obscene, but whether serious works may be freely published in a civilised community, *irrespective of subject*. The jury's verdict seemed a step in the direction of civilisation, even to people like myself who consider the novel in question grotesque and absurd. Now Mr. Sparrow comes along, pronounces the book even obscener than we realised, and scuttles out of sight before we have time even to utter a four-letter word.

The treason of the intellectuals has been splendidly demonstrated.

Perhaps you can persuade Mr. Sparrow to tell us, in view of his further researches, whether in fact, as he darkly hints, he thinks *Lady Chatterley's Lover* should not have been published, and if not, why not?

M. B. SIMMS

London

I HAVE from the first been struck by the fact that, in another respect, the book appears not to be as true to the life as it claims. In real life, Lady C. and Mellors would surely have had to think about the possibility of pregnancy—and wouldn't this have made a world of difference in terms of the uninhibited enjoyment and spontaneity of their get-togethers? Either they would have taken precautions, which would have introduced an element of cold-blooded calculation, or they would have had to do a bit of worrying in the absence of precautions—neither of which alternatives would have improved the picture Lawrence was presenting.

It occurs to me that Lawrence and Frieda had no children. Perhaps, for some reason, he did not himself have to anticipate the eventuality of

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conception. But I don't recall Mellors telling Lady C. of any reason why she shouldn't worry.

H. L.

Lausanne

Master Sparrow's case
Is as base-
less and more specious
Than the old-fangled
Same-angled
Claim of Lucretius:

nam more ferarum
quadrupedumque magis ritu plerumque putantur
concipere uxores, quia sic loca sumere possunt,
pectoribus positis, sublatis semina lumbis.

(iv. 1264–7)

M. M.

London

WARDEN SPARROW makes a case that entirely convinces me. Nevertheless there is something painful in the solemn way he treats a case that is so essentially ridiculous.

Certainly, as he says, the defence in the Chatterley action "reeks of humbug." Bishops, literary worthies, earnest young girls crossing their hearts on oath that it is an entirely suitable book, while the matter of Mellors using Lady Chatterley "in the Italian fashion" is never so much as mentioned. How far can British hypocrisy go? One's imagination reels!

Still, I believe, in a different way Warden Sparrow is as far off target as the defence witnesses.

Thomas Mann in *The Confessions of Felix Krull* describes a sexual episode between Felix as a young hotel servant and a rich woman twice his age, a guest in the hotel. The relationship between them could be called unnatural and perverted. Mann's comment (quoting from memory) is "all sexual love is perversion—the unnatural desire of the male to return to the womb."

This shows a real insight into the nature of the sexual relationship. Equally well expressed is King Lear's speech beginning, "But to the girdle do the Gods inherit. . . ."

Warden Sparrow lacks this insight, and any trace of a sense of humour.

MICHAEL BOSTON

London

WOULD Mr. John Sparrow have been pleased had the defence failed in the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* case?

Surely it was up to the prosecution to have pursued the implications of the "night of sensual passion" beyond a lame "not very easy . . . to know what he is driving at" rather than for the defence to have prejudiced the winning of so important a victory on a point of pedantic accuracy? If it be humbug not to mention sophisticated and partially concealed details of a novel to a jury so that a serious writer's view of life can be published, then it is the most justifiable humbug I can imagine. It would have been monstrous had the case been lost because some facet of the novel was mentioned that even the experts had failed to realise.

That is the point, no matter how faintly ridiculous and early Georgian *Lady Chatterley's Lover* may now appear. "Early Georgian" may well be the explanation of Lawrence's hedging, by the way, and not "the likelihood of the book being seized by the Customs or the police." It was the age of the veiled suggestion.

Mr. Sparrow, of course, could have written some entertaining marginalia on the "uplift taint," as Lawrence himself called it, had he employed a lighter and more satiric pen. As it is the article is just plain don-mongering with the best of it already said by Andrew Shonfield [ENCOUNTER, Sept. 1961].

WENSLEY PITHEY

London

[*Mr. Sparrow's comment on the correspondence and the controversies in the periodical press will be published next month.*]

Bert Brecht

I HOPE you can allow me to clear up three points which Mr. Martin Esslin's letter in your February issue left slightly befogged. First of all, he and I were never discussing the obvious faults involved in the editing of Brecht's poems, but only his claim that there had been "politically motivated tampering." To me this phrase implies (a) conformity with party or state policy and (b) the imposition of the editors' will as against Brecht's own. I have read the six youthful poems, which are indeed much as Mr. Esslin guesses them to be, but I am sure that (a) played no part in their exclusion, or in that of any other omitted poems that I know. In a sense it probably determined the suppression of the Red Army Soldier (which we have all known about for years), but that was decided long ago by Brecht himself, as were the other cuts and amendments which Mr. Esslin now adduces. As for (b), my own criticism of the editors is that they have not asserted themselves enough. I know them personally and am convinced that everything, from the binding down to the last comma, is based first and foremost on Brecht's instructions. The fact that Mr. Esslin and I would both have liked things done differently is no reason for trying to smear them.

Secondly, I have been editing Brecht's writings on the theatre with the knowledge of all concerned, and nobody has ever given me this mysterious message about the reference to Malenkov having to be dropped. I omitted it from the first because it was an obvious space-filler whose relevance and source were alike obscure. Since my earlier letter to you, however, I have seen the former head of the Brecht Archive, who told me that it was in fact not by Brecht but a note of his own which had got accidentally among Brecht's papers. No doubt this is why it was dropped from the reprint of the German volume: something I'm afraid I would never have

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noticed if Mr. Esslin had not nosed it out. It is just this kind of thing that makes me feel Mr. Esslin's view of what is "very interesting and significant" (as he called it) in Brecht's work needs treating with caution.

Thirdly, comforting as it must be for Brecht's English publishers to know that Mr. Esslin can let their politics pass, this was not quite what we were talking about. He spoke in his original article of a "political control from a distance" exercised over their choice of plays for translation. Is he still suggesting that they are subject to this? I think all those involved have a right to an unequivocal answer.

JOHN WILLETT

London

I FIND it very gratifying that Mr. Willett is now on record as regards "the obvious faults" of the German edition of Brecht's "complete" poems. It is equally gratifying to me that Mr. Willett now agrees with me about the six schoolboy poems omitted from that edition and that he confirms that these poems are so favourable to the Kaiser's war and German nationalist sentiments that they would appear unacceptable to the present regime in East Germany. Mr. Willett ignores the other instances of "politically motivated tamperings" in the edition concerned which I quoted in my letter (e.g., the omission of the poem on Karl Kraus' sixtieth birthday), but he again confirms that the omission of the Hymn of the Red Army Soldier is an instance of politically motivated suppression (but why only "in a sense"?). I am afraid that in the face of these facts Mr. Willett's assurance that these omissions could not possibly be politically motivated just because he knows the editors personally seems somewhat gratuitous. I never speculated on whether the editors concerned omitted these passages on instructions from Brecht or on their own initiative. This is totally irrelevant. A complete edition is a *complete* edition. All complete editions contain passages that the authors concerned wanted to suppress. Kafka asked his executor to burn all his papers. This would not have justified his literary executor to suppress Kafka's work. The same applies to Brecht, particularly as the admission of the principle that editors are entitled to suppress what the author wanted to suppress would inevitably lead to the suppression of passages that the editors *think he might have wanted* them to suppress and thus to the complete bowdlerising of Brecht's literary remains. The example of the recently exposed falsification of Nietzsche's literary remains by his sister in the interests of another totalitarian ideology tells its own cautionary tale.

Nor does Mr. Willett seem to realise that his suggestion that the omissions and alterations concerned are *not* politically motivated is highly injurious to the editors concerned. If they have no political motives, these omissions would be even more arbitrary and irresponsible.

Mr. Willett's second point involves him in a really charming contradiction. In his first paragraph he assures us of the meticulous, loving care and piety of the editors concerned. In his second paragraph he explains the embarrassing passage about Malenkov by an action of truly horrifying carelessness on the part of the same devoted and scholarly editors: the politically embarrassing passage was not by Brecht but had been *written by one of the literary executors himself* and included by pure accident. And then it remained in the text of the book through all the stages of proofreading and correction!? And when the error was finally detected, the passage was left out, without even a footnote to undeceive the public?!

I am inclined to take a far more charitable view of this matter than Mr. Willett: it strikes me as a particularly gallant attempt on the part of the gentleman concerned to cover up the horrifying fact that Brecht had in all innocence referred to a member of the anti-party group as an authority on socialist realism. The passage concerned comes from Brecht's late theoretical work *Die Dialektik auf dem Theater* which, as is well known, includes verbatim notes taken down by Brecht's pupils during rehearsals and discussions of the Berliner Ensemble. The passage concerned may be one of many taken down by members of his circle. In that technical sense it may have been "written" by one of them. But the same would apply to many others which were not omitted from the second edition of *Schriften zum Theater*.... I still think Mr. Willett should include it in his forthcoming edition, if only to give his readers a chance to judge for themselves that this passage in its apodictic tone and authoritative formulation is clearly a transcription of Brecht's words by a disciple.

As to Mr. Willett's third point: anyone who takes the trouble to re-read my original article and my letter in your February number will find the answer to Mr. Willett's question. I see no need to state my point of view for a third time.

MARTIN ESSLIN

London

Colin MacInnes & Book Trade

THERE can be no doubt, as Mr. MacInnes says, that the present standard of book production is very unimaginative. But I am not sure that the fault lies entirely with publishers. Authors can in part be to blame *through lack of interest.*

I am certain that if more authors asked their publishers whether they might have a say in choosing their own covers, then there would be far more harmony between "the inside and outside of books." I speak from experience. In the case of my last three books, I have been allowed to choose my own artists—Barbara Jones, Terence Durham, and Joan Hassall.

And why also cannot there be made a more imaginative use of end-papers? They add greatly to the appeal of books. Victorian novels were profusely illustrated. Why cannot modern novels have at least one genuine scene or panorama of scenes printed from them on the end-papers? So often dust-jackets, apart from being quite inappropriate in style, have no bearing whatever—not even in

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mood—to the story that they are supposed to illustrate.

NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

London

IN REPLY to Mr. MacInnes and all the small shopkeepers who have replied to his swiftly written article: the major requirement of a bookshop is that it should have all the books, including the slow sellers, which are often, in this hypertrophied culture of ours, the best reading. I know of no bookshop in London which answers to this requirement as well as Heffer's and Bowes & Bowes in Cambridge, Blackwell's and some others in Oxford. This is quite deplorable. I am unable to buy books at Foyles or any of the other "famous" Charing Cross Road shops; I am even unable to buy books at Collet's University Bookshop. Bumpus is quite impossible. So unless the London bookshops can reach the standards of the "provincial" ones in terms of actual stock, it is futile to talk of jazzing up the book trade. Mr. MacInnes appears merely to want our lives to be a little more pressurised. I thought that novelists and even essayists had the insight to expose the failings of our culture; advertising is one of them, and yet Mr. MacInnes is helpless in its grasp.

JULES LUBBOCK

Clare College,
Cambridge

AFRICA
1962

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AUTHORS

George Steiner *writes of himself*: "I am an American born in Paris in 1929. Though lucky enough to have been brought up speaking English, French, and German, I have tried to make of the English language my homeland.... Went to New York in 1940 and was educated at the French Lycée. Persuaded the University of Chicago to let me take a B.A. in one year. Went on to Harvard for an M.A. and the chance to work with MacLeish.... Rhodes Scholar to Balliol, 1950–52. I found graduate work at Oxford less than exhilarating. Won the Chancellor's Essay Prize and began publishing verse and criticism, but had my doctoral dissertation refused. The examiners were quite right. Re-did the thesis under the sceptical but immensely generous eye of Humphry House. Meanwhile I had joined the editorial staff of the *Economist*, with which I maintained a happy association, on and off, from 1952 to 1956. Began my *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*. Completed it as a guest of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (have always tried to treat the Atlantic as a mutinous ditch). Stayed on in Princeton to write *The Death of Tragedy*.... Now back in England as Fellow of Churchill College and director of studies in English....

"I have published verse, essays, book-reviews (too many) and a story. I believe that criticism should be written, wherever possible, with as much force and style as literature itself. But perhaps I can learn enough about writing to cease being a critic. I dream of writing a certain book—idiosyncratic, inward yet persuasive—and of drawing illustrations for it myself. Probably a mirage....

"I should like to add that this essay was in the works a long time before the Richmond Lecture. Being an admirer of both parties, I am now braced for impartial damnation...."

"A Woman of No Standing" will be included in *Brendan Behan's Island*, which will be published in September by Hutchinsons.

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